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AND

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S ADDRESS ON MILTON

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1899

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GIFT

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

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1899

To My Father

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"AFTER I had for my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense), been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers, both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly by this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. . . . I began thus far to assent to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die. . . . I applied myself to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue."

—THE REASON OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE included in this edition several poems not in the college requirements, in order to give a proper introduction and conclusion to the work and to reveal the element of unity and growth. The notes furnish biographical, historical, and critical material sufficient to enable the student to gain an insight into the forces which went to form the mind and art of the great poet.

Additional interest is given to the volume from the fact that it contains the most significant of the many estimates of Milton's greatness, Mr. Matthew Arnold's address at the unveiling of the Milton Memorial Window in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster.

The dates which precede the notes to each poem refer, if there are two, to the date of composition of

the poem and its first publication by Milton; and if three, the second refers to date of first publication by some one other than Milton. The letters K., T., and M., in brackets, refer to Keightley, Todd, and Masson respectively.

If errors, biographical, historical, or textual, are found in this edition, I shall be glad to have my attention called to them.

A. J. G.

BROOKLINE, January, 1899.

INTRODUCTION

THE period intervening between the destruction of the Spanish galleons in 1588 and the battle of La Hogue, which gave England her dominion of the seas in 1692, witnessed the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth close in an evening of extraordinary splendor and beauty, —

> "From worlds not quickened by the sun,
> A portion of the gift is won;
> An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
> On ground which British shepherds tread,"

and the splendor penetrated into the dark night of the Stuarts, illuminating a solitary peak which in its turn threw the fire across the waste of the eighteenth century, and in its light arose Wordsworth and Coleridge, those

> "Twin morning stars of the new century's song."

The two great influences at work in England at the time of Milton's birth were Hellenism, which came

through the Renaissance, and revived the spontaneity of consciousness out of which literature and art were re-created; and Hebraism, which came through the Reformation, and revived the strictness of conscience out of which the spirit of righteousness was quickened. The former gave us Elizabethan England, with Spenser, Sidney, and Shakespeare; the latter Puritan England, with Butler, Bunyan, and Milton. If we would understand the forces which created and nurtured Milton, the man and poet, we must turn to the history of the closing years of Elizabeth and the period of James I. and Charles I. His work previous to the Commonwealth is distinguished for its Renaissance spirit, its charm of childhood and grace of youth, while revealing at the same time a sublime dignity born of early Puritanism; but after the Commonwealth it became militant and is itself a history of the time, yet is still true to the two great articles of Milton's creed, — Art and Faith. Carlyle has said that Milton was the child of Shakespeare and John Knox. He may be called the last of the Elizabethans and the first of the moderns.

Elizabethan England was characterized by marvellous expansion in literary, religious, and commercial interests which led to a spirit of independence in the nation as a whole. She was "a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep,

and shaking her invincible locks as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam." London was the centre of all these interests, and Elizabeth the object of chivalrous loyalty. When the midday splendor of the literary impulse revealed itself in the *Faerie Queene* instinct with the vital soul of the age, it became "the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, the solace of every soldier." In it were embodied those principles of literary, political, and religious activity which were destined to shake the foundations of the Church and the kingship in the moral earnestness which was developing out of the Renaissance and the Reformation; for it was in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, years of splendor at home and triumph abroad, that England passed through that mighty change due to her becoming a nation of a single book, — the Bible. The Bible, clothed in the language of Shakespeare, and enthroned in the home which Puritanism had created, fostered manners, virtue, freedom, power, in society, politics, religion, and literature. From it came the new conception of the dignity of the individual, in which humanity rediscovered its patent of nobility; it revealed the divinity of humanity to "every boy that driveth the plough," as well as to every theologian in his study.

It is difficult for us in the nineteenth century to

realize how complete was the union of the literary, political, and religious spirit under the influence of the teaching of the Bible. From it came that noble enthusiasm for one God, one Law, which meant no divine right for kings which was not a divine right for every man. Every political act affected both literature and religion; every literary production carried a political and a religious message; while every observance of religion looked to the creation of a purer political and literary activity. The crowds which flocked to St. Paul's to listen to the reading of Bonner's Bibles, and the tenant, the farmer, and the shopkeeper who reverently read a chapter from the "big book" around the family hearth, were being trained in literary and political principles by which of old the poet, the statesman, and the prophet — heroes all — had been nurtured. "Legends and annals, war song and psalm, state rolls and biographies, the mighty voices of prophets, the parables of evangelists, stories of mission journeys, of perils by sea and among the heathen, philosophic arguments, apocalyptic visions, — all were flung broadcast over minds unoccupied, for the most part, by any rival learning." Such was the temper of the Puritan at the accession of James I.

The natural disposition of James, and the training which he received during the stormy times in Scotland, make it easy to forecast what will be the characteristics

of his reign at a time when Episcopacy is established in England, and Presbyterianism in Scotland; when the two antagonistic parties, Catholics and Puritans, each ready for the death struggle, are watching his every movement; and the civilized world interested spectators. Where Elizabeth had been wise, temperate, judicious, serious, he was foolish, radical, rash, and trifling. Early in his reign his temper of mind was revealed at the Hampton Court Conference called to consider the petition of Puritans for some changes in the methods of the Episcopacy by which it would be more in harmony with the democratic idea of the Reformers. On that occasion he said, "A Scottish Presbyter as well fitteth with monarchy as God and the Devil," and ordered the ten who presented the petition (signed by more than a thousand of their ministers) to be imprisoned. His next step was to assert the doctrine of Divine Right of Kings by dictating to the House of Commons; the result of which was the reaction of the Commons against the Catholics, the exodus of Pilgrims and Puritans to the New World and the beginning of a New England.

Notwithstanding the political and religious ferment of the time, the principles of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which created Elizabethan England, still remained, although the old enthusiasm for England gradually died out in the strife of parties, and imita-

tion took the place of creation. No great work appears in this period of exhaustion and transition which does not owe its inspiration to the atmosphere of the previous period. It is significant that in 1623, the year of the publication of the first folio of Shakespeare, Waller published his earliest couplets and ushered in the era of the Classicists with their brilliant conceits, their servility to foreign models, and their learned emptiness.

> "Ye were dead
> To things ye knew not of, — were closely wed
> To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
> And compass vile; so that ye taught a school
> Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
> Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
> They tallied. Easy was the task:
> A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
> Of Poesy."

Charles was heir not only to his father's failings, but to all the mischief which those failings had produced. The breach between king and Parliament grew wider because of the excesses of the Duke of Buckingham and the marriage of Charles with a French Catholic princess. Hampden and Sir John Eliot led the attack upon the king; Parliament refused to grant money, and declared that in matters of religion and politics it must be consulted, and that if the king refused "he was a betrayer of the liberty of

England and an enemy to the same." Charles soon demonstrated that he was both of these by establishing the Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, and by attempting to force the prayer-book upon the Scotch Covenanters. We must not forget that at this time, when Charles was at the height of his tyranny and England was tossing upon the wave of civil war, Milton was resting from his first flight and pluming himself for a second, "of highest hope and hardest attempting," in the quietude of classic Italy; and that on learning the direction affairs were taking, his love of freedom made but one course clear for him, — to return and enter the contest for liberty "when the Church of God was at the foot of her insulting enemies."

After Charles found that he could not scare Parliament into submission, he threw down the gauntlet at the foot of the royal standard at Nottingham, and war began. Edgehill, Marston Moor, and Naseby reveal the course of that struggle which ended on the scaffold, and the Commonwealth began its work with a prohibition against the proclaiming of any person king of England or Ireland, and the abolition of the House of Lords. Government was vested in a Council of State, and Cromwell was head of the army. Milton became Latin Secretary; and here begins that struggle of twenty years for the defence of the one thing he holds

dearest,—liberty; "religious liberty against the prelates, civil liberty against the crown, the liberty of the press against the executive, liberty of conscience against the Presbyterians, and domestic liberty against the tyranny of canon law." The poet becomes philosopher and statesman; and the glory of English literature, the champion and martyr of English liberty. As recreation from the severe strain of composing the prose controversial pamphlet, Milton threw off those sonnets so charged with the personal note that they bring us into the passion and the pathos that constituted his deepest life during these memorable years.

The splendid prophecy of the future of English literature which the Milton of these two periods presents, is that of intellectual and moral earnestness revealed in the highest type of beauty — the union of sweetness and light.

We are wont to give a too great proportion of attention to the Milton of *Paradise Lost*, and the result is a belief that Milton lacked the finer and sweeter qualities with which we associate Spenser and Shakespeare. The historian has emphasized certain types of the Puritan revealed in the political and religious activity of the time, and has given us for the most part the formal, rather than the real, Puritan. Hence he has become a symbol of an austere, harsh, and canting

reformer, who finds little in the nature of existing politics and religion which is to his mind. And although between Clarendon and Macaulay we have a great variety of types, they severally need supplementing by a careful study of that furnished by the Milton of the Shorter Poems. Here will be found nothing of religious cant, no hatred of art and beauty even when they are misused, no frowning upon wholesome gayety, but a generous recognition of all those elements that tend to make life stronger in hope, more perfect in temper, and finer in spirit.

The love of nature and man, and the pleasures afforded by a life of ease and social converse revealed in *L'Allegro;* the love of art and philosophy, and the delights of solitude in *Il Penseroso;* the tribute paid to noble men and gentle women in song, action, and all the magnificent appointments of the Masque, with its splendid condemnation of the fanaticism of Prynne; the tender and delicate passion in the poems on Diodati; and the passion for liberty, the prayers for toleration, and the religious rapture set in the strong framework of the political sonnets, present us a truer type in heart and intellect of that real Puritanism which lay beneath the less attractive manifestations. Here is the type of all that was deepest and most permanent in English life between the luxuriousness of the Elizabethan and the licentiousness of the Restoration.

The highest note of the prose of these periods confirms the revelation of the verse. "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose," says he in the *Areopagitica*, "to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? . . . How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another?"

APPRECIATIONS

"Nor second He, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night."

GRAY.

"MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

WORDSWORTH.

"O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even."

TENNYSON.

"HE left the upland lawns and serene air
Wherefrom his soul her noble nurture drew,
And reared his helm among the unquiet crew
Battling beneath; the morning radiance rare
Of his young brow amid the tumult there
Grew dim with sulphurous dust and sanguine dew;
Yet through all soilure they who marked him knew
The signs of his life's dayspring, calm and fair.
But when peace came, peace fouler far than war,
And mirth more dissonant than battle's tone,
He, with a scornful sigh of his clear soul,
Back to his mountain clomb, now bleak and frore,
And with the awful night he dwelt alone,
In darkness, listening to the thunder's roll."

ERNEST MYERS.

"THE egoism with which all Milton's poetry is impregnated is the egoism of a glorious nature. If we were asked who in the eighteen Christian centuries stands before us as the highest approximation to what we conceive as Christian manhood, in which are rarely blended purity and passion, gracefulness and strength, sanctity and manifold fitness for all the worldly duties of the man and the citizen, we should scarcely hesitate to answer — John Milton."

REV. F. W. ROBERTSON.

"THE genius and office of Milton were to ascend by the aids of his learning and his religion by an equal perception, that is, of the past and the future — to a higher insight and more lively delineation of the heroic life of man. This was his poem; whereof all his indignant pamphlets and all his soaring verses are only single cantos or detached stanzas. It was plainly needful that his poetry should be a version of his own life, in order to give weight and solemnity to his thoughts, by which they might penetrate and possess the imagination and the will of mankind. . . . His own conviction it is which gives such authority to his strain. Its reality is its force. If out of the heart it came, to the heart it must go."

EMERSON.

"MILTON'S sublimity is in every man's mouth. Is it felt that his poetry breathes a sensibility and tenderness hardly surpassed by its sublimity? We apprehend that the grandeur of Milton's mind has thrown some shade over his milder beauties; and this it has done, not only by being more striking and imposing, but by the tendency of vast mental energy to give a certain calmness to the expression of tenderness and deep feeling. A great mind is the master of its own enthusiasm, and does not often break out into those tumults which pass with many for the signs of profound emotion. Its sensibility, though more intense and enduring, is more self-possessed and less perturbed than that of other men, and is therefore less observed and felt, except by those who understand, through their own consciousness, the workings and utterance of genuine feeling."

CHANNING.

"MILTON'S more elaborate passages have the multitudinous roll of thunder, dying away to gather a sullen force again from its own reverberations, but he knew that the attention is recalled and arrested by those claps that stop short without echo and leave us listening. There are no such vistas and avenues of verse as his. In reading him one has a feeling of spaciousness such as no other poet gives. Milton's respect for him-

self and for his own mind and its movement rises well-nigh to veneration. He prepares the way for his thought and spreads on the ground before the sacred feet of his verse tapestries inwoven with figures of mythology and romance. There is no such unfailing dignity as his."

LOWELL.

MILTON[1]

THE most eloquent voice of our century uttered, shortly before leaving the world, a warning cry 'against the Anglo-Saxon contagion.' The tendencies and aims, the view of life and the social economy of the ever-multiplying and spreading Anglo-Saxon race, would be found congenial, this prophet feared, by all the prose, all the vulgarity amongst mankind, and would invade and overpower all nations. The true ideal would be lost, a general sterility of mind and heart would set in.

The prophet had in view, no doubt, in the warning thus given, us and our colonies, but the United States still more. There the Anglo-Saxon race is already most numerous, there it increases fastest; there material interests are most absorbing and pursued with most energy; there the ideal, the saving ideal, of a high and rare excellence, seems perhaps to suffer most danger of being obscured and lost. Whatever one may think of the general danger to the world from the Anglo-Saxon contagion, it appears to me difficult to deny that the growing greatness and influence of the United

[1] An address delivered in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, on the 13th of February, 1888, at the unveiling of a memorial window presented by Mr. George W. Childs of Philadelphia.

States does bring with it some danger to the ideal of a high and rare excellence. The *average man* is too much a religion there; his performance is unduly magnified, his shortcomings are not duly seen and admitted. A lady in the State of Ohio sent to me only the other day a volume on American authors; the praise given throughout was of such high pitch that in thanking her I could not forbear saying that for only one or two of the authors named was such a strain of praise admissible, and that we lost all real standard of excellence by praising so uniformly and immoderately. She answered me with charming good temper, that very likely I was quite right, but it was pleasant to her to think that excellence was common and abundant. But excellence is not common and abundant; on the contrary, as the Greek poet long ago said, excellence dwells among rocks hardly accessible, and a man must almost wear his heart out before he can reach her. Whoever talks of excellence as common and abundant, is on the way to lose all right standard of excellence. And when the right standard of excellence is lost, it is not likely that much which is excellent will be produced.

To habituate ourselves, therefore, to approve, as the Bible says, things that are really excellent, is of the highest importance. And some apprehension may justly be caused by a tendency in Americans to take,

or at any rate, attempt to take, profess to take, the average man and his performances too seriously, to overrate and overpraise what is not really superior.

But we have met here to-day to witness the unveiling of a gift in Milton's honour, and a gift bestowed by an American, Mr. Childs of Philadelphia; whose cordial hospitality so many Englishmen, I myself among the number, have experienced in America. It was only last autumn that Stratford-upon-Avon celebrated the reception of a gift from the same generous donor in honour of Shakespeare. Shakespeare and Milton —he who wishes to keep his standard of excellence high, cannot choose two better objects of regard and honour. And it is an American who has chosen them, and whose beautiful gift in honour of one of them, Milton, with Mr. Whittier's simple and true lines inscribed upon it, is unveiled to-day. Perhaps this gift in honour of Milton, of which I am asked to speak, is, even more than the gift in honour of Shakespeare, one to suggest edifying reflections to us.

Like Mr. Whittier, I treat the gift of Mr. Childs as a gift in honour of Milton, although the window given is in memory of his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, the 'late espoused saint' of the famous sonnet, who died in childbed at the end of the first year of her marriage with Milton, and who lies buried here with her infant. Milton is buried in Cripple-

gate, but he lived for a good while in this parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and here he composed part of *Paradise Lost*, and the whole of *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. When death deprived him of the Catherine whom the new window commemorates, Milton had still some eighteen years to live, and Cromwell, his 'chief of men,' was yet ruling England. But the Restoration, with its 'Sons of Belial,' was not far off; and in the meantime Milton's heavy affliction had laid fast hold upon him; his eyesight had failed totally, he was blind. In what remained to him of life he had the consolation of producing the *Paradise Lost* and the *Samson Agonistes*, and such a consolation we may indeed count as no slight one. But the daily life of happiness in common things and in domestic affections — a life of which, to Milton, as to Dante, too small a share was given — he seemed to have known most, if not only, in his one married year with the wife who is here buried. Her form 'vested all in white,' as in his sonnet he relates that after her death she appeared to him, her face veiled, but with 'love, sweetness, and goodness' shining in her person, — this fair and gentle daughter of the rigid sectarist of Hackney, this lovable companion with whom Milton had rest and happiness one year, is a part of Milton indeed, and in calling up her memory, we call up his.

And in calling up Milton's memory we call up, let me say, a memory upon which, in prospect of the Anglo-Saxon contagion and of its dangers supposed and real, it may be well to lay stress even more than upon Shakespeare's. If to our English race an inadequate sense of perfection of work is a real danger, if the discipline of respect for a high and flawless excellence is peculiarly needed by us, Milton is of all our gifted men the best lesson, the most salutary influence. In the sure and flawless perfection of his rhythm and diction he is as admirable as Virgil or Dante, and in this respect he is unique among us. No one else in English literature and art possesses the like distinction.

Thomson, Cowper, Wordsworth, all of them good poets who have studied Milton, followed Milton, adopted his form, fail in their diction and rhythm if we try them by that high standard of excellence maintained by Milton constantly. From style really high and pure Milton never departs; their departures from it are frequent.

Shakespeare is divinely strong, rich, and attractive. But sureness of perfect style Shakespeare himself does not possess. I have heard a politician express wonder at the treasures of political wisdom in a certain celebrated scene of *Troilus* and *Cressida;* for my part I am at least equally moved to wonder at the

fantastic and false diction in which Shakespeare has in that scene clothed them. Milton, from one end of *Paradise Lost* to the other, is in his diction and rhythm constantly a great artist in the great style. Whatever may be said as to the subject of his poem, as to the conditions under which he received his subject and treated it, that praise, at any rate, is assured him.

For the rest, justice is not at present done, in my opinion, to Milton's management of the inevitable matter of a Puritan epic, a matter full of difficulties for a poet. Justice is not done to the *architectonics*, as Goethe would have called them, of *Paradise Lost;* in these, too, the power of Milton's art is remarkable. But this may be a proposition which requires discussion and development for establishing it, and they are impossible on an occasion like the present.

That Milton, of all our English race, is by his diction and rhythm the one artist of the highest rank in the great style whom we have; this I take as requiring no discussion, this I take as certain.

The mighty power of poetry and art is generally admitted. But where the soul of this power, of this power at its best, chiefly resides, very many of us fail to see. It resides chiefly in the refining and elevation wrought in us by the high and rare excellence of the great style. We may feel the effect without being able to give ourselves clear account of its cause, but

the thing is so. Now, no race needs the influences mentioned, the influences of refining and elevation, more than ours; and in poetry and art our grand source for them is Milton.

To what does he owe this supreme distinction? To nature first and foremost, to that bent of nature for inequality which to the worshippers of the average man is so unacceptable; to a gift, a divine favour. 'The older one grows,' says Goethe, 'the more one prizes natural gifts, because by no possibility can they be procured and stuck on.' Nature formed Milton to be a great poet. But what other poet has shown so sincere a sense of the grandeur of his vocation, and a moral effort so constant and sublime to make and keep himself worthy of it? The Milton of religious and political controversy, and perhaps of domestic life also, is not seldom disfigured by want of amenity, by acerbity. The Milton of poetry, on the other hand, is one of those great men 'who are modest'—to quote a fine remark of Leopardi,—that gifted and stricken young Italian, who in his sense for poetic style is worthy to be named with Dante and Milton—'who are modest because they continually compare themselves, not with other men, but with that idea of the perfect which they have before their mind.' The Milton of poetry is the man, in his own magnificent phrase, of 'devout prayer to that Eternal

Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.' And finally, the Milton of poetry is, in his own words again, the man 'of industrious and select reading.' Continually he lived in companionship with high and rare excellence, with the great Hebrew poets and prophets, with the great poets of Greece and Rome. The Hebrew compositions were not in verse, and can be not inadequately represented by the grand measured prose of our English Bible. The verse of the poets of Greece and Rome no translation can adequately reproduce. Prose cannot have the power of Verse; verse-translation may give whatever of charm is in the soul and talent of the translator himself, but never the specific charm of the verse and poet translated. In our race there are thousands of readers, presently there will be millions, who know not a word of Greek and Latin, and will never learn those languages. If this host of readers are ever to gain any sense of the power and charm of the great poets of antiquity, their way to gain it is not through translations of the ancients, but through the original poetry of Milton, who has the like power and charm, because he has the like great style.

Through Milton they may gain it, for, in conclusion, Milton is English; this master in the great style

of the ancients is English. Virgil, whom Milton loved and honoured, has at the end of the *Æneid* a noble passage, where Juno, seeing the defeat of Turnus and the Italians imminent, the victory of the Trojan invaders assured, entreats Jupiter that Italy may nevertheless survive and be herself still, may retain her own mind, manners, and language, and not adopt those of the conqueror.

'Sit Latium, sint Albani per secula reges!'

Jupiter grants the prayer; he promises perpetuity and the future to Italy — Italy reinforced by whatever virtue the Trojan race has, but Italy, not Troy. This we may take as a sort of parable suiting ourselves. All the Anglo-Saxon contagion, all the flood of Anglo-Saxon commonness, beats vainly against the great style but cannot shake it, and has to accept its triumph. But it triumphs in Milton, in one of our own race, tongue, faith, and morals. Milton has made the great style no longer an exotic here; he has made it an inmate amongst us, a leaven, and a power. Nevertheless he, and his hearers on both sides of the Atlantic, are English, and will remain English —

'Sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt.'

The English race overspreads the world, and at the same time the ideal of an excellence the most high and the most rare abides a possession with it forever.

(*Moseley's Preface to the first edition of Milton's Poems*, 1645.)

"THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

"It is not any private respect of gain, Gentle Reader (for the slightest Pamphlet is nowadays more vendible than the works of learnedest men), but it is the love I have to our own Language, that hath made me delight to collect and set forth such Pieces, both in Prose and Verse, as may renew the wonted honor and esteem of our English tongue; and it's the worth of these both English and Latin Poems, not the flourish of any prefixed encomions, that can invite thee to buy them — though these are not without the highest commendations and applause of the learnedest Academicks, both domestic and foreign, and, amongst those of our own country, the unparalleled attestation of that renowned Provost of Eton, SIR HENRY WOOTTON. I know not thy palate, how it relishes such dainties, nor how harmonious thy soul is: perhaps more trivial Airs may please thee better. But, howsoever thy opinion is spent upon these, that encouragement I have already received from the most ingenious men, in their clear and courteous entertain-

ment of Mr. WALLER'S late choice Pieces, hath once more made me adventure into the world, presenting it with these ever-green and not to be blasted laurels. The Author's more peculiar excellency in these studies was too well known to conceal his Papers, or to keep me from attempting to solicit them from him. Let the event guide itself which way it will, I shall deserve of the age by bringing into the light as true a birth as the Muses have brought forth since our famous SPENSER wrote; whose Poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled. Reader, if thou art eagle-eyed to censure their worth, I am not fearful to expose them to thy exactest perusal.

"Thine to command,

"HUMPH. MOSELEY."

IMPORTANT EDITIONS OF MILTON'S WORKS

Works in Verse and Prose, with a life by J. Mitford. 8 vols. London, 1851. 8vo.

Poems, English and Latin. The first edition and the first work bearing Milton's name. London, 1645. 8vo.

Poetical Works, containing *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, and his poems on several occasions, with notes on *Paradise Lost*, by P. H. 5 parts. London, 1695, folio.

Poetical Works, with notes by T. Newton. 3 vols. London, 1749–52. 4to.

Poetical Works, illustrated, with life by H. J. Todd. 6 vols. London, 1801. 8vo. Second Edition, with additions and an index. 7 vols. London, 1809. 8vo. Third Edition, with other illustrations. 6 vols. London, 1826. 8vo.

Poetical Works, with notes, and Newton's life of Milton, by E. Hawkins. 4 vols. Oxford, 1824. 8vo.

Poetical Works, with Cowper's translation of the Latin and Italian Poems, and life of Milton by his nephew, E. Philips, etc. 3 vols. London, 1826. 8vo.

Poetical Works, with life and notes by Rev. H. Stebbing. To this is prefixed Dr. Channing's essay on the poetical genius of Milton. London, 1839. 12mo.

Poems, with notes by T. Keightley. 2 vols. London, 1859. 8vo.

Poetical Works, with memoir and critical remarks by J. Montgomery. One hundred and twenty engravings. *Bohn's Illustrated Library*. 2 vols. London, 1861. 8vo.

The Globe Edition, with introduction, by D. Masson. London, 1877. 8vo.

Poetical Works, with memoir, illustration, notes, and an Essay on Milton's Versification, by D. Masson. 3 vols. London, 1882. 8vo.

Poetical Works, with introduction and notes, by D. Masson. London.

The Minor Poems of John Milton, with notes, by W. J. Rolfe. New York, 1887.

The Shorter Poems of John Milton, with the two Latin Elegies and Italian Sonnet to Diodati and Epitaphium Damonis. London and New York, 1889. Edited by A. J. George.

Sonnets of John Milton, edited by Mark Pattison. London, 1883.

Complete Prose Works, both English and Latin, by J. Toland. 3 vols. Amsterdam (London), 1698, folio.

Complete Prose Works, by T. Birch. 2 vols. London, 1738.

Prose Works, by R. Fletcher. London, 1833. 8vo.

Prose Works, with introduction, by R. W. Griswold. 2 vols. New York, 1847. 8vo.

Prose Works, preface and notes, by J. A. St. John. 5 vols. *Bohn's Standard Library*, London, 1848–53. 8vo.

For *Complete Bibliography*, see *John Milton* by R. Garnett (*Great Writers*).

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	PREFATORY NOTE	vii
	INTRODUCTION	ix
	APPRECIATIONS	xix
	MILTON, BY MATTHEW ARNOLD	xxiv
	MOSELEY'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF MILTON'S POEMS, 1645	xxxiii
	IMPORTANT EDITIONS OF MILTON'S WORKS . .	xxxv
1630	At a Solemn Music	1
	On Shakespeare	2
1633	L'Allegro	3
	Il Penseroso	9
1634	Arcades	17
	Comus:	
	Lawes' Dedication to the Edition of 1637 .	22
	Sir Henry Wotton's Commendatory Letter, 1638	23
	The Persons	26
	The Text of Comus	27
1637	Lycidas	71

		PAGE
1655	On his Blindness	79
1658	On his Deceased Wife	80
	Chronological	81
	The Cambridge Mss.	84
	Notes	87
	References	177

MILTON'S COMUS, LYCIDAS, AND OTHER POEMS

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC

BLEST pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;
And to our high-raised phantasy present
That undisturbèd song of pure concent,°
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne°
To Him that sits thereon,
With saintly shout and solemn jubilee;
Where the bright Seraphim in burning° row
Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow,°
And the Cherubic host in thousand quires°
Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
With those just Spirits that wear victorious° palms,
Hymns devout and holy° psalms

Singing everlastingly:°
That we on Earth, with undiscording voice,
May rightly answer that melodious noise;°
As once we did,° till disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
To his celestial consort° us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light!°

ON SHAKESPEARE 1630

WHAT needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pilèd stones
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing° pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong° monument.
For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,°

Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued° book
Those Delphic° lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make *us* marble° with too much conceiving,
And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

L'ALLEGRO

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born°
In Stygian° cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,°
And the night-raven sings;°
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,°
In dark Cimmerian° desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept° Euphrosyne,°
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,°

With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,°
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.°
Haste thee, Nymph,° and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks° and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.°
Come, and trip it,° as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,

In unreproved° pleasure free;
To hear the lark° begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn° doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate°
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;°
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,

And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale°
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight° mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip° round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;°
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements° it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon° and Thyrsis° met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis° dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis° to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,

To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure° delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And jocund rebecks° sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,°
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,°
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,°
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat°
She° was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he,° by Friar's lantern° led,
Tells how the drudging goblin° sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,°
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.

Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,°
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds° of peace, high triumphs° hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence,° and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear°
In saffron robe,° with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,°
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild,
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,°
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout°

Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.°
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,°
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,°
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond° with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,

Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners° of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!°
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense° of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister° might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop° queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta° long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,°

Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole° of cypress lawn°
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing° with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble,° till
With a sad leaden° downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast,° that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest,° with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;°
And the mute Silence hist along,°
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,

While Cynthia° checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.°
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!°
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,°
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air° will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm°

To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp,° at midnight hour.
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,°
With thrice-great Hermes,° or unsphere°
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind° that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons° that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy°
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age°
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus° from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;

Or call up him° that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards° beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited° Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy° to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,

And shadows brown, that Sylvan° loves,
Of pine, or monumental° oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,°
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered° Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream°
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,°
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,°

And storied° windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age°
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

ARCADES

Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:

I. *Song*

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?°
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame, that her high worth to raise°
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
Less than half we find expressed;
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state° she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne

Shooting her beams like silver threads:
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright
In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona° be,
Or the towered Cybele,°
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:°
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward, THE GENIUS OF THE WOOD *appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.*

Gen. Stay, gentle° Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour° sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renownèd flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus,° who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs,° as great and good.

I know this quest of yours and free° intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,
Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl° the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove;°
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill;
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting° thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet° smites,
Or hurtful worm° with cankered venom bites.
When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn°
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,

Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words and murmurs° made to bless.
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,°
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.°
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature° to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear°
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,
Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;°
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. *Song*

O'er the smooth enamelled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
  Follow me, as I sing
  And touch the warbled string:
Under the shady roof°
Of branching elm star-proof
    Follow me.
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendor as befits
    Her deity.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. *Song*

Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more
  By sandy Ladon's° lilied banks;
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,
  Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
  A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;

Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the Lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

COMUS

"A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, &c."

(For the Title-pages of the Editions of 1637 and 1645 see Notes at p. 122 and p. 123.)

DEDICATION OF LAWES' EDITION OF 1637.

(Reprinted in the Edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673.)

"*To the Right Honourable John, Lord Brackley, son and heir-apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, &c.*"

"My Lord,

"This Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view, and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair

hopes and rare endowments of your much-promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name; and receive this as your own from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and, as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*, so now in all real expression

"Your faithful and most humble Servant,

"H. Lawes."

"*The Copy of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wotton to the Author upon the following poem.*"

(In the Edition of 1645: omitted in that of 1673.)

"From the College, this 13 of April, 1638.

"Sir,

"It was a special favour when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it and to enjoy it rightly; and, in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H., I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, over a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good Authors of the ancient time; among which I observed you to have been familiar.

"Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this

month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your Songs and Odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities.* But I must not omit to tell you that I now only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed some good while before with singular delight; having received it from our common friend Mr. R., in the very close of the late R.'s Poems, printed at Oxford: whereunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of Stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce.*

"Now, Sir, concerning your travels; wherein I may challenge a little more privilege of discourse with you. I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way: therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B., whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S. as his governor; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your farther journey into Italy where he did reside, by my choice, some time for the King, after mine own recess from Venice.

"I should think that your best line will be through the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa; whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge. I hasten, as you do, to Florence or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story, from the interest you have given me in your safety.

"At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni,

an old Roman courtier in dangerous times; having been steward to the Duca di Pagliano, who with all his family were strangled, save this only man that escaped by foresight of the tempest. With him I had often much chat of those affairs, into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and, at my departure toward Rome (which had been the centre of his experience), I had won his confidence enough to beg his advice how I might carry myself there without offence of others or of mine own conscience. '*Signor Arrigo mio*,' says he, '*I pensieri stretti ed il viso sciolto* will go safely over the whole world.' Of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgment doth need no commentary; and therefore, Sir, I will commit you, with it, to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

"Your friend, as much to command as any of longer date,

"HENRY WOTTON."

Postscript

"Sir: I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your departure without some acknowledgment from me of the receipt of your obliging letter; having myself through some business, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad and diligent to entertain you with home-novelties, even for some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle."

THE PERSONS

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.
COMUS, with his Crew.
THE LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were: —

The Lord Brackley;
Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother;
The Lady Alice Egerton.

[This list of the Persons, &c., appeared in the Edition of 1645, but was omitted in that of 1673.]

COMUS

The first Scene discovers a wild wood

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered°
In regions mild of calm and serene° air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered° in this pinfold° here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned° gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key°
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds°
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in, by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove,°
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles

That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd° bosom of the deep;
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several° government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,°
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters° to his blue-haired° deities;
And all this tract° that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer° of mickle° trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation,° proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed° in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard!
And listen why; for I will tell° you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.°
Bacchus,° that first from out the purple grape

Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,°
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island° fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This Nymph,° that gazed upon his clustering locks
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic° and Iberian° fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient° liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond° intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,

All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive° their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof,°
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain°
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,°
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.°

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands*

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day°
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream:
And the slope° sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,°
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws,° in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,°
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice° move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves

Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto,° to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets° her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat',° and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry
Our concealed solemnity.

Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.°

The Measure

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains:° I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells° into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course.
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye

Hath met the virtue of this magic dust
I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift° keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may her business hear.

The LADY *enters*

Lady. This way the sound was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges° full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit

As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,°
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they come not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single° darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes,° and beckoning shadows dire
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended

By a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!°
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . .
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's° margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale°

Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus° are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens° three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled° Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla° wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,

And fell Charybdis° murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. — Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless° the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?

Lady. Dim darkness and this heavy labyrinth.

Comus. Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?

Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf.

Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?—

Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose.

Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?

Lady. As smooth as Hebe's° their unrazored lips.

Comus. Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked° hedger at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,°
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted° clouds. I was awe-strook,

And, as I passed, I worshipped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them.
Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky° bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
And, if your stray attendance° be yet lodged,
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted° lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls

And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on. . . .

The Two Brothers

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit° Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,°
Or Tyrian Cynosure.
Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,

Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!

Eld. Bro. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion° of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,°
Or so unprincipled° in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)

Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled,° and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre,° and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.°

Sec. Bro. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his grey hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree°
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard

Of dragon-watch with unenchanted° eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned° heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on° Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unowned° sister.

Eld. Bro. I do not, brother,
Infer° as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.°
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.

Sec. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace° huge forests, and unharboured° heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched majesty
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say no evil thing° that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,°
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin or swart° faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity° from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?

Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear° to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft° converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,

But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.

Sec. Bro. How charming° is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

Eld. Bro. List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.

Sec. Bro. Methought so too; what should it be?

Eld. Bro. For certain,
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Sec. Bro. Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near!

Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Eld. Bro. I'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd*

That hallo I should know. What are you? Speak.
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.°
Spir. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.
Sec. Bro. O brother, 'tis my father's Shepherd, sure.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis!° whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,°
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?
Spir. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.

But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.
Spir. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets,° taught by the heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel° of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs° mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding° reason's mintage

Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts° —
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves,° or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorred rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop° of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted° steeds

That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last° a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!'
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung

Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.
Sec. Bro. O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?
Eld. Bro. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;

But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,°
Harpies° and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind,° I'll find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls° to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.

Spir. Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.

Eld. Bro. Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,°
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;

Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples° of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;°
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly°
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He called it Hæmony,° and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies' apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs° of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may

Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him: break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,°
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis, lead on apace; I'll follow thee;
And some good angel bear a shield before us!

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and* THE LADY *set in an enchanted Chair: to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne° was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
Comus. Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates

Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep° here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes,° which the wife of Thone°
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty

That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored° falsehood and base forgery?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

Comus. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,°
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,°
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing° hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,

That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched° the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,°
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last

To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin;° must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain° will serve to ply
The sampler,° and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.
Lady. I had not thought° to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt° her arguments

And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispensed
In superfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say; — yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery

That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;°
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.
Comus. She fables not.° I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove°
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus°
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly.—Come, nō more!
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees°
And settlings of a melancholy blood.

But this will cure all straight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste . . .

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in*

Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,°
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus° old I learnt,
The soothest° shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph° not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Lŏcrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood

That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;°
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectared lavers strewed with asphodil,°
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts,° and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf° delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain° said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,

In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.°

Song

Sabrina fair,
  Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
  In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping° hair;
    Listen for dear honour's sake,
    Goddess of the silver lake,
      Listen and save!

Listen and appear to us,°
In name of great Oceanus,
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;

By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn° sheen
Of turkis° blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays:°
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet°
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!

Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help ensnarèd chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marbled venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.°

SABRINA *descends, and* THE LADY *rises out of her seat*

Spir. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,°
May thy brimmèd waves for this

Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses° fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head° be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursed place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate

His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the two* BROTHERS *and* THE LADY.

Song

Spir. Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.

Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epilogizes*

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,°
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens° fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn° alleys fling

Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth° and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.°
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid,° her famed son, advanced,
Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side°
Two blissful twins° are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.

But now my task is smoothly done;
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,

Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.°
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,°
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

LYCIDAS

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more,° O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck° your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead,° dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew

Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then,° Sisters of the sacred well°
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse°
With lucky words favour *my* destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed° upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly° winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute
Rough Satyrs° danced, and Fauns with cloven heel

From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtus loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding° vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm° to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.°
Where were ye,° Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep°
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona° high,
Nor yet where Deva° spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have done?

What could the Muse° herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better° done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear° spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury° with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:°
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil°
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives° and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;

As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse,° and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain° I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,°
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged° wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades° their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope° with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse,° and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus,° reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought° with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?" °

Last came,° and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks,° and stern bespake: —
"How well could I have spared° for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb° into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths!° that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel° pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up,° and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist° they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf° with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine° at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return, Alpheus;° the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use°
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star° sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose° that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe,° and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse° where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.°
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,°

Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward,° Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins,° waft the hapless youth.
Weep no more,° woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs° his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore°
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him° that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive° nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,

And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.°
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius° of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth° swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days° in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent° which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve there with my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"

I fondly° ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands° at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis° from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of childbed taint
Purification° in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled;° yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

CHRONOLOGICAL

1608–1639. First Period: Education and Early Poems

1608 Born at the Spread Eagle, Bread Street, Cheapside, London, December 9.
Early education at home.

1620–25 At St. Paul's School. Friendship with Diodati.
Paraphrase on Psalms cxiv. and cxxxvi.

1625 Enters Christ College, Cambridge.

1626 *On the Death of a Fair Infant dying of a Cough.*
Elegia Prima, Ad Carolum Diodatum.

1628 *At a Vacation Exercise in the College.*

1629 Degree of Bachelor of Arts.
On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.
Elegia Sexta, Ad Carolum Diodatum.

1630 *Upon the Circumcision. The Passion. On Time. At a Solemn Music. Song on May Morning. On Shakespeare.*

1631 *On the University Carrier. Another on the Same. An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester. On his having arrived at the Age of Twenty-three.*

1632 Leaves Cambridge.

1632–38 At Horton, Buckinghamshire.
1633 *To the Nightingale. L'Allegro. Il Penseroso.*
1634 *Arcades. Comus.*
1637 Death of his mother. *Lycidas.*
1638–39 Journey to the Continent. *Italian Sonnets.* Returns to St. Bride's, Fleet Street, London. *Epitaphium Damonis.*

1640–1660. Second Period: Prose Works and Sonnets

1640 At Aldersgate Street. Becomes tutor to his nephews. First plan of *Paradise Lost.*
1641 First of a series of pamphlets on social and political questions. *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England.*
1642 *When the Assault was intended to the City.*
1643 Marriage to Mary Powell. She deserts him and he writes *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.*
1644 *To a Virtuous Young Lady. To the Lady Margaret Ley. On Education. Judgment of Martin Bucer. Areopagitica. Colasterion. Tetrachordon.*
1645 At Barbican. First edition of his poems. His wife returns. *On the Detraction which followed upon my writing Certain Treatises. On the Same.*
1646 Death of his father. *On the New Forcers of Conscience. To Mr. H. Lawes on his Airs. On the Religious Memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson.*
1647 At High Holborn, Lincoln's Inn Fields.
1648 *On the Lord General Fairfax.*

1649 *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.*
Becomes Latin Secretary to Cromwell.
Eikonoklastes.
1651 *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio.*
1652 At Petty France, Westminster.
Loss of sight. *To the Lord General Cromwell.*
To Sir Henry Vane the Younger.
Death of his wife.
1653 The Protectorate.
1654 *Defensio Secunda.*
1655 *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont.*
On his Blindness. To Mr. Lawrence.
To Cyriack Skinner. To the Same.
1656 Marriage to Catherine Woodcock.
1658 Death of Catherine Milton.
On his Deceased Wife.
1659–60 Last pamphlets.
1660 The Restoration. Milton in hiding and in custody.

1660–1674. Third Period: The Great Epics

1660 At High Holborn and Jewin Street.
1663 Marriage to Elizabeth Minshul.
Friendship of Thomas Ellwood.
1664 At Artillery Walk, Bunhill-fields.
1665 *Paradise Lost* completed.
1667 *Paradise Lost* published.
1671 *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* published.
1674 Death.

THE CAMBRIDGE MSS.

THE most interesting of the personal relics of Milton is the collection of Mss. now in possession of the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

From the last years of Milton's student life at Cambridge he kept a note-book or folio sheets in which he kept first drafts of his English pieces or copies of them. These drafts, or emendations of them, and others of his Latin pieces were the basis of the first edition of his poems "printed by his true copies." The original Mss. remained in Milton's possession until 1658. The latest work is not in his own hand but in that of an amanuensis who assisted him during his blindness. These and other Mss. after his death in 1674 descended to his wife, but became dispersed about the time of her return to her native place in Cheshire. A portion of these Mss. came into the possession of Sir Henry Newton Puckering.

"It is just possible," says Masson, "that he may have known Milton," as his uncle and aunt were neighbors of Milton in Aldersgate Street. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was a lover of books. At the age of eighty he returned to Trinity, had rooms assigned, and spent some time there. At his death in 1700 he left his library of four thousand volumes to his old college. In this collection were many Mss. of Milton's poems. They were neglected for a long time, until Charles Mason, a Fellow of the College, sorted and arranged them. In 1736 Thomas Clarke, another Fellow of the College, had them handsomely bound in morocco; making a volume of fifty-four pages, folio size. On the inside of one of the covers was the following inscription: "Membra haec eruditissimi et poene divini Poetae, olim miserè disjecta et passim sparsa, postea vero fortuito inventa, et in unum denuo collecta a Carlo Mason, ejusdem Collegii socio, et inter Miscellanea reposita, deinceps eà quâ decuit religione servari voluit Thomas Clarke, nuperrimè hujusce Collegii, nunc vero Medii Templi Londini, Socius, 1736." ("These relics of a most learned and almost divine poet, formerly miserably separated and scattered, but afterwards by chance found, and lately arranged by Charles Mason, Fellow

of the same College, and placed among the Miscellanies, are at last to be preserved with becoming piety by the desire of Thomas Clarke, very recently of this College, now of the Middle Temple, London, 1736.") This sacred volume is shown to visitors at Trinity College Library in a glass case. It cannot be removed from the case for examination except by permission of the Master and Fellows, and in presence of one of the Fellows.

NOTES

LITTLE is known of Milton's remote genealogy beyond the fact that Mylton, or Milton, was a distinct surname in the fourteenth century. In the reign of Elizabeth there were various branches of this family in Oxfordshire and adjoining counties. It was from the Oxfordshire Miltons, of the village of Great Milton in the Hundred of Thame, eight miles from Oxford, that the poet derived his pedigree. His grandfather, Richard Milton, was a substantial yeoman of Stanton St. John, about five miles from Oxford, within the forests of Shotover, of which he was under-ranger. He was a firm Catholic, although it is said he sent his son John to Christ Church, Oxford. John had strong tendencies toward the Established Church, and, as Aubrey says, "because he was found reading a Bible in English in his room," he was disinherited by his father. He then went up to London, where by the assistance of friends he established himself in the business of a scrivener, attorney, and law stationer, whose chief business was the execution of deeds, leases, wills, etc.

His shop was in Bread Street, Cheapside, and bore the sign of the Spread Eagle, which was either the family crest or the insignia of the Scriveners Company. Being a man of industry

and integrity in the conduct of his affairs, he was soon in the way of substantial, even of a plentiful fortune. He became possessor of the Spread Eagle, and, according to Aubrey, "of another house in that street, called the Rose, and other houses in other places." In 1600, when he was about thirty-seven years of age, he married Sarah Jeffrey, a woman who proved to be in every way worthy of her husband. Milton speaks of her as "a most excellent mother, and particularly known for her charities in the neighborhood." They lived over the shop, and there six children were born to them, of whom only three lived beyond infancy, — Anne, John, and Christopher. The poet was the third child. According to the Register of the parish of Allhallows, "The 20th daye of December 1608 was baptized John, the Sonne of John Mylton Scrivenor." The young Milton was educated at home by a tutor, Thomas Young, a Scotchman and a Puritan, and was also a day scholar at St. Paul's. It is in this home, in this old Classical school, and in the sights and sounds of the London of Shakespeare and Jonson, that the young poet is being nurtured.

It is an interesting fact that the Revival of Learning which came into England from Italy stimulated not only the love of art and literature but quickened the conscience as well. Colèt had placed over the master's desk in St. Paul's school the inscription: "Hear ye Him." Tyndale affirmed, "Ere many years I will cause that the boy that driveth the plough shall know the Scriptures." This was being realized in the century in which Milton was born, for it has been called a century of Bibles, there having been published between 1611 and 1711 no less than five hundred and twenty-five editions. Alluding to

the influence of the Bible at this time Taine says: "Hence have sprung much of the English language, and half of the English manners; it was these big books that had transformed Shakespeare's England. To understand this great change (from 'Pagan to Christian Renaissance'), try to picture these yeomen, these shopkeepers, who in the evening placed this Bible on their table, and bareheaded with veneration heard or read one of its chapters, . . . not for amusement but to discover in it their doom of life and death. . . . They understand it with the imagination and the heart." Breathing the atmosphere of a Puritan home where life was deep and rich, where music was heard daily, and where the Bible was the chief textbook in morals, and Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' *Divine Weekes and Workes* was the chief collection of poems, it is no wonder that his genius was kindled at the altar of Hebrew psalmody, and shone through the medium of English undefiled. "He was of a family in which courage, moral nobility, the love of art, were present to whisper the most beautiful and eloquent words about his cradle." It may be, as Johnson said, that the Paraphrases of the Psalms raise no great expectations, and yet they form no inconsiderable evidence that a "mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies" was being trained in the humble home over the shop in Bread Street.

No study is more interesting or profitable than that which reveals the forces of heredity and early environment which have contributed to the forming of the mind and the fashioning of the art of those who have made our literature fresh and strong. Especially rewarding is such study in the life and work of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, and those who

have given such lustre to the literature of this century, — Burns, Carlyle, and Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Tennyson. Such study of the great writers would relieve much of the tedium in the reading at home, in the school, and in the university, because it would reveal the great truth, "That he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things." — MILTON.

"The child is father of the man." — WORDSWORTH.

"Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring." — TENNYSON.

"These first years are the most impressionable (nothing that happens after we are twelve matters very much): they are also the most vivid years when we look back, until at the end what lies between bends like a hoop, and the extremes meet." — BARRIE.

Aubrey says, "Milton was a poet at eleven," and Milton himself writes that under the guidance of his tutor, Thomas Young, he "penetrated into the recesses of the Muses, saw the sacred and green places on Parnassus, and drank the Pierian cups." In 1625 he entered Cambridge, but before that time he had studied Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, and Italian. His knowledge of Italian was due to his friendship with Charles Diodati, son of an Italian father and English mother, who was his schoolmate at St. Paul's. Diodati entered Oxford shortly before Milton entered Cambridge. At Cambridge Milton continued hard at work, "tied night and day to his books" in

studious and select reading. He had no great admiration for the University which acted the part of "Decency and Custom starving Truth, and blind Authority beating with his staff the child that might have led him." Because of a quarrel with his tutor he was sent to London for a time. Writing to his friend Diodati of this experience he says: "If this be exile gladly do I enjoy my state of banishment." It was during this visit that his first English poem was written, on the death of his niece who died during the Plague in London. In this poem we find the wholesome beauty of the Greek, and the nobly reverent earnestness of the Hebrew, revealed in the verse of Spenser, "whose poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated as sweetly excelled." Taine says: "Milton was not born for the drama, but for the ode." In this and the following poems "the broad river of lyric poetry streams from him, impetuous, with even flow, splendid as a cloth of gold."

In a pamphlet published in 1642, where Milton defends his Cambridge career against the imputations of those who had insinuated that it was "inordinate and violent," we have some very interesting biographical material. He says that his early and favorite authors were the elegiac poets, but that on finding they were not always chaste he turned to the "two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura (Dante and Petrarch), who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse." Not long after, he was "confirmed in the opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem. . . . Next, for hear me out now, readers, that I may tell ye whither my younger feet wandered, I betook me among those lofty

fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings. . . . I read in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or of his life, if it so befel him, the honour and chastity of virgin or matron. From whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity ever must be." The divine volumes of Plato taught him that "Love begins and ends in the soul, and produces those happy twins of her divine generation — Knowledge and Virtue." It is to reveal this divine Love, Knowledge and Virtue that the college poems were written.

1630–1645

At a Solemn Music

(Three drafts in Milton's own hand in the Cambridge Mss.)

Milton was not long absent from the University. On his return another tutor was assigned him, and "pervaded with pleasure" he continued his work.

The title of his poem might well be *At a Symphony.* Milton was nurtured in an atmosphere of song. His father was a musician and composer of some reputation. His compositions have found a place in collections of the best music. He composed the tunes of York and Norwich so universal now. He contributed to a volume of Madrigals known as *The Triumphes of Oriana*, sung before Queen Elizabeth; and his music appears in many other collections.

"Thyself
Art skilled to associate verse with airs
Harmonious, and give the human voice

A thousand modulations, heir by right
Indisputable of Arion's fame.
Now say, what wonder is it if a son
Of thine delight in verse, if so conjoined
In close affinity, we sympathise
In social arts, and kindred studies sweet."

— *Ad Patrem.*

In his Tractate on Education Milton said of the interim between exercise and meat: "It may, both with profit and delight, be taken up in recreating and composing their (the pupils) travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music, heard or learned; either while the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices, either to religious, martial, or civil ditties; which, if wise men and prophets do not extremely err, have a great power over dispositions and manners to smooth and make them gentle."

Masson says: "Often must Milton as a child have bent over his father while composing, or listened to him as he played. Not unfrequently of an evening, if one or two of his father's musical acquaintances dropt in, there would be voices enough in the Spread Eagle for a little household concert. Then might the well printed and well kept set of *Orianas* be brought out; and each one present taking a suitable part, the child might hear, and always with fresh delight, his father's own madrigal:

'Then sang those shepherds and nymphs of Diana,
Long live fair Oriana, long live fair Oriana.'

Nor would the opening words of the 27th Psalm, doubtless often sung in the family to York tune, be without a deeper significance: —

> 'The Lord is both my health and light;
> Shall men make me dismayed?' etc.

Joining with his young voice in these exercises of the family the boy became a singer as soon as he could speak. We see him going to the organ for his own amusement, picking out little melodies by the ear, and stretching his tiny fingers in search of pleasing chords."

"In the Abbey Church of Tewksbury are still heard the tones of the very organ on which Milton played before Cromwell at Hampden Court; and the picture thus evoked from the past symbolizes the true influence of poets such as Dante and Milton on the conduct of a commonwealth." — ERNEST MYERS.

Wordsworth in his sonnet on the Sonnet uses this expression referring to Milton: —

> "In his hand
> The thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
> Soul-animating strains — alas, too few."

It is not unlikely that Milton had in mind the music of King's College Chapel to which Wordsworth alludes: —

> "List! O list!
> The music bursteth into second life;
> The notes luxuriate, every stone is kissed
> With sound, or ghost of sound, in mazy strife;
> Heart-thrilling strains, that cast before the eye
> Of the devout, a veil of ecstasy."
>
> — *Inside King's College Chapel.*

Tennyson on revisiting Cambridge says: —

> "And heard once more in College fanes,
> The storm their high-built organs make,
> And thunder-music, rolling, shake
> The prophets blazon'd on the panes."
>
> — *In Memoriam*, LXXXVII.

6. **concent.** Latin *concentus*, harmony.

10. **burning.** This was "princely" in first, and "trifled" in second draft.

11. This line has three forms: —

(1) "Their loud immortal trumpets blow."
(2) "Loud symphony of silver trumpets blow."
(3) "High-lifted, loud, and angel-trumpets blow."

12. Originally —

> "And Cherubim, sweet wingèd squires."

14. **victorious.** Originally "the blooming."

15. **holy.** Originally "sacred."

7–16. **sapphire-coloured throne**, etc. Cf. *Ezekiel*, i. 26; *Revelation*, v., xi.

After line 16 in the first draft was a couplet now omitted: —

> "While all the starry rounds and arches blue
> Resound and echo Hallelu."

18. After this line in first draft there were three lines, now omitted, in place of the seven we now have: —

> "By leaving out those harsh ill-sounding jars
> Of clamorous sin that all our music mars:

And in our lives and in our song
May keep in tune with Heaven," etc.

In the second draft, the first two lines here are —

"By leaving out those harsh chromatic jars
Of sin that all our music mars:"

19. **did**, originally "could." This line reminds us of the first in *Paradise Lost*: —

"Of man's first disobedience," etc.

27. **consort**. Society.

28. Originally —

"To live and sing with Him in ever-endless light."

1630-1632-1645

On Shakespeare

This perfect little poem first appeared printed anonymously in the Second Folio of Shakespeare's Works, 1632, with the title, *An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakespeare.* The First Folio was published in 1623, two years before Milton entered Cambridge, and we must believe that he would not be long without one of these in his possession. How carefully he read it, and how completely he was in sympathy with the mind of the great dramatist is revealed in this poem, perhaps the greatest of all great tributes paid to this child of Fancy. Masson has given a suggestive hint as to the origin of the poem. He thinks that it was probably written in Milton's copy of the First Folio. In the original editions of Milton's poems it bears the date 1630.

It is but natural to compare this poem with Ben Jonson's prefixed to the First Folio: —

To the Memory of my beloved,

THE AUTHOR,

MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE;

AND

WHAT HE HATH LEFT US.

"Soule of the Age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage!
My Shakespeare, rise: I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
A little further, to make thee a roome:
Thou art a Moniment, without a tombe,
And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
. . . . . .
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights upon the bankes of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere
Advanc'd, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth! thou Starre of Poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheere the drooping Stage;
Which, since thy flight frõ hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despaires day, but for thy Volumes light."

It would be interesting to know the occasion of this poem. Was it that about this time a monument to Shakespeare was

being proposed? The Stratford monument was erected as early as 1623, for, in the First Folio, we have the lines of Leonard Digges: —

> "Shakespeare, at length thy pious fellowes give
> The world thy Workes; thy Workes, by which outlive
> Thy Tombe thy name must: when that stone is rent
> And Time dissolves thy Stratford Moniment,
> Here we alive shall view thee still. This Book,
> When Brass and Marble fade, shall make thee look
> Fresh to all Ages."

4. **star-ypointing.** This is of Milton's coining, as the prefix *y* belongs only to past passive participle. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 12: —

> "In heaven yclept Euphrosyne."

8. **livelong.** In the print of Second Folio this is *lasting*. (M.)

9, 10. **to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,** etc. Does this imply that Milton wrought with slowness?

Heminge and Condell, the editors of the First Folio of Shakespeare's works, said: "His mind and hand went together; and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot on his papers." Ben Jonson says: "He was indeed honest, of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions; wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped."

11. **unvalued.** Invaluable.

12. **Delphic.** Inspired.

14. **Dost make us marble,** etc. Masson says: "'Dost turn *us* into marble by the effort of thought to which thou compellest

us,' a very exact description of Shakespeare's effect on his readers. The sense being that we, Shakespeare's readers, are the true marble of his tomb, or monument."

1633–1645

L'ALLEGRO

Milton took his degree of M.A. in 1632 but he did not return to the city of his birth. The sights and sounds with which he was now to be conversant were those of the beautiful English Midlands. His father had retired to the rural village of Horton, seventeen miles from London, in that part of Buckinghamshire known as Chiltern Hundreds. "Here," says Milton, "I, with every advantage of leisure, spent a complete holiday in turning over the Greek and Latin writers."

The situation of Horton is beautiful for prospect. The eye ranges over dewy meadows, rich tillage land, and green pasture, with abundant beech, elm, poplar, and cedar; numerous streamlets hurry to lose themselves in the Colne, while the Thames, Eton, and Windsor are not far away. The beautiful old church of the 12th century stands in the centre of the little village, and near it is the site of the poet's home.

In this poetic springtime we fancy our Scholar Gipsy — such heart was in him — to be abroad in the primal burst of day's bloom; as the lark sings at heaven's gate, he wanders wherever nature leads, drinking in with pure organic pleasure the beauteous forms and colors in earth and sky, while his ear catches the sounds of bellowing kine and bleating sheep, as the herd drives them afield, and the whistle of the ploughboy and the song of the

milkmaid is in the air. When the sun is shining high he seeks some retired spot where the laborer leaves

"His coat, his basket and his earthen cruise."

And as the troop of hunters jovial, talking, saunter by, he escapes to yonder lawn where young and old keep holiday with dance and song and hoodman blind. Thus through

"All the live murmur of a summer's day"

he is gathering

"Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness."

Such a day we have revealed to us in *L'Allegro*, a day of joyous mirth.

The slow and stately introduction, the rushing, joyous music of the body of the poem, the vividness of picture, the playful humor and the master melody, reveal the best of Shakespeare and Spenser and yet they are not of either master, but truly Miltonic.

The modern visitor at Horton feels the atmosphere of that olden time.

"Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields."

2, 3. **Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born**, etc. This figure is partly classical, and partly the creation of later poets. In classical mythology Nyx, or Night, is made the mother of Thanatos, or Death, Hypnos, or Sleep, and other children. Spenser, in *Tears of the Muses*, included Ignorance among the children.

"Ignorance,
Born in the bosom of the black Abysse,

And fed with Furies milk for sustenance
Of his weake infancie, begot amisse
By yawning Sloth on his own mother Night."

In the old mythology Darkness son of Chaos is husband of Night. In Milton's lurid picture of Hell-Gate and the region beyond, *Paradise Lost*, book ii., we have: —

"Where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy," etc. — (894–896.)

"behold the throne
Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide in the wasteful Deep. With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested *Night*." — (959–962.)

3. **Stygian.** Cf. *Paradise Lost*, ii. 574–577: —

"Along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams —
Abhorrèd Styx, the flood of deadly hate."

6. **jealous wings.** "The watch which fowls keep when they are sitting." — WARBURTON.

7. **the night-raven sings.** The bird of ill-omen. Cf *Macbeth*, i. 5.

"The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements."

9. **As ragged as thy locks.** The term ragged applied to rocks is common in Shakespeare: —

"ragged prison walls." — *Richard II.*, v. 5.
"on the ragged stones break forth." — *Titus Andronicus*, v. 3.

10. **dark Cimmerian desert.** In the *Odyssey*, xi. 14, the Cimmerians are dwellers "beyond the ocean" in perpetual darkness: —

> "There lies the land, and there the people dwell
> Of the Cimmerians, in eternal cloud
> And darkness."

12. **yclept.** The old past participle of verb *clepen*, to call.

> "They clepe us drunkards." — *Hamlet*, i. 4.

Euphrosyne. Mirth, one of the Graces.

14–23. **Whom lovely Venus,** etc. Milton creates these figures. In the old mythology Euphrosyne is daughter of Zeus.

22. **fresh-blown roses,** etc.

> "Morning roses newly washed with dew."
> —*Taming of the Shrew*, ii. 1.

24. **debonair.** *De bon air.*

25–32. **Haste thee, Nymph,** etc. An allusion to the merry-making of Elizabethan England. Cf. Ben Jonson's masque, *Pan's Anniversary*: —

> *Nym.* "Thus, thus begin the yearly rites
> Are due to Pan on these bright nights;
> His morn now riseth and invites
> To sports, to dances, and delights:
> All envious and profane, away,
> This is the shepherds' holyday."

27. **Quips and Cranks.** Smart and odd sayings.

33, 34. **Come, and trip it,** etc.

"Before you can say 'Come' and 'Go,'
And breathe twice, and say 'so, so,'
Each one tripping on his toe
Will be here with mop and mow." — *Tempest*, i. 1.

40. **unreproved.** Not to be found fault with, innocent.

41. **To hear the lark,** etc. Compare this and the following lines in respect of direct and musical description with Tennyson's *Ode to Memory*: —

"The seven elms, the poplars four,
That stand beside my father's door," etc.

Cf. *Cymbeline*, ii. 2: —

"Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steed to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes."

44. **dappled dawn.**

"and look the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray."
—*Much Ado About Nothing*, v. 3.

59. **eastern gate.**

"Even till the Eastern gate, all fiery-red."
— *Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii. 2.

62. **dight.** Set in order, arrayed.

67. **tells his tale.** Warton suggests that this means "makes his reckoning," counts his sheep, rather than the commonly

understood, tells his story. This seems plausible from the fact that the morning was not the time for story-telling.

69. **Straight.** At once, suddenly. Common in Shakespeare.

"About your business straight." — *Richard III.*, i. 2.
"Straight to stop the rumour." — *Henry VIII.*, ii. 1.
"We'll have a speech straight." — *Hamlet*, ii. 2.

70. **landskip.** Old form. Cf. Tennyson, *Merlin and the Gleam*: —

"The landskip darken'd."

75. **daisies pied.**

"When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white," etc.
Loves Labours Lost, v. 2.

77–80. **Towers and battlements.** While the descriptions are not true to Horton in every detail it is not unnatural that we should understand this to be an allusion to Windsor Castle.

83–88. **Corydon and Thyrsis . . . Phillis . . . Thestylis.** Familiar names for shepherds.

91. **secure.** Untroubled.

94. **rebecks.** Stringed instrument like a fiddle.

96. **chequered shade.**

"The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind
And make a chequered shadow on the ground."
— *Titus Andronicus*, ii. 3.

98. **sunshine holiday.**

"Many years of sunshine days." — *Richard II.*, iv. 1.

100. **spicy, nut-brown ale.** Wassail bowl of sweet, warm, spiced ale with roasted crab-apples in it.

102. **How Faery Mab the junkets eat.**

> "She is the fairy midwife, and she comes
> In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
> On the forefinger of an alderman,
> Drawn with a team of little atomies," etc.
> — *Romeo and Juliet*, i. 4.

> "This is Mab, the mistress Fairy,
> That doth nightly rob the dairy,
> She that pinches country wenches."
> — BEN JONSON, *The Satyr*.

junkets. Cream cheese.

103, 104. **She . . . And he.** The two shepherds who are telling the story.

104. **Friar's lantern.** Jack-o'-the-Lantern, Will-o'-the-Wisp.

105. **drudging goblin.** Robin Goodfellow, a favorite with Elizabethan story-tellers.

The fairy speaking to Puck says: —

> "Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
> Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
> Call'd Robin Goodfellow; are you not he
> That frights the maidens of the villagery:" etc.
> — *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1.

110. **the lubber fiend.** The fairy in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1, addresses Puck as "thou lob of spirits."

117. **Towered cities please us then.** The youth now retires to his country cottage and amuses himself with stories of a life quite in contrast to that of the rustics with whom he has been associating.

120. **weeds . . . triumphs.** The old meaning of weeds,

clothing. **Triumphs**, one of the forms of entertainment where are tournaments, etc.

122. **Rain influence.** Cf. *Ode on the Nativity*, 71.

125. **let Hymen oft appear.** As in Masques in honor of marriage. Cf. Ben Jonson's *Hymenæi.*

126. **In saffron robe.** In Ben Jonson's *Hymenæi* we have: — "Entered Hymen the God of Marriage in a saffron-coloured robe."

132–134. **If Jonson's learned sock be on**, etc. Sock was a low-heeled shoe worn in comedy.

> "I visit, or to smile, or weep,
> The winding theatre's majestic sweep,
> The grave or gay colloquial scene recruits
> My spirits, spent in learning's long pursuits." — *Elegy* i.

"If poets may be divided into two exhaustive but not exclusive classes — the gods of harmony and creation, the giants of energy and invention — the supremacy of Shakespeare among the gods of English verse is not more unquestionable than the supremacy of Jonson among the giants." — A. C. SWINBURNE.

136. **Lydian airs.** Soft and light as compared with the Dorian, which are more suited to revealing contemplation.

139. **bout.** Turn.

150. **That Orpheus' self**, etc. According to the myth which reveals Orpheus as the master musician who, on the death of his wife Eurydice, went to the lower world to recover her. His music charmed even Pluto, who released Eurydice on the condition that Orpheus would not look upon her until they had reached the earth. Orpheus turned to see if she were following him and she was lost to him.

151, 152. These lines remind one of the last lines of Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love:* —

> "If these delights thy mind may move,
> Then live with me and be my love."

1633–1645

IL PENSEROSO

When the merry-making was over, and the sun,

> "which doth glorify
> The orange and pale violet evening sky,"

sank to rest, and the 'mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells' ceased,

> "No chair remained before the door; the bench
> And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
> The laborer, and the old man who had sate
> A later lingerer."

The new day now begins, the day which is characterized by wise activity, as the other had been by wise passiveness; for nature and books are the joys of the poet, and by these a healthy activity is secured between What Does, What Knows, What Is. The mood here is that of joy in thoughtfulness, when the world is shut out and the mind shut in upon itself. Each experience here has its complement in those of the previous poem; and as a result the movement is slow and measured where the other was rapid and careless. One hardly knows where to look for a happier union of natural magic and moral profundity, of child-like mirth and the joy of mature manhood.

The treatment of nature in these poems is not that of Chaucer with its freshness of the early world, nor that of Wordsworth

with its spiritual revelation; but it is pure description of things seen by the poet in a special mood.

Mr. Henry Van Dyke says: "I do not think that *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Comus* have any lower place in the world, or any less enduring life, than *Paradise Lost*. We have thought so much of Milton's strength and sublimity that we have ceased to recognize what is also true, that he, of all English poets, is by nature the supreme lover of beauty."

Mr. F. T. Palgrave says: "*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the earliest great lyrics of the landscape in our language, despite all later competition, still remain supreme for range, variety, lucidity, and melodious charm within their style."

1–30. **Hence, vain deluding Joys**, etc. These lines should be compared in detail with the first twenty-four of *L'Allegro*. We must remember that these are complementary moods, but not contrary, — not inconsistent with the nature of a true man. It is usually assumed that Milton is the Milton of *Il Penseroso* and *Paradise Lost*, but a careful study of the shorter poems will reveal how wholesome and holy was the nature of the young poet. Cf. Masson, *Milton's Youth*.

3. **bested.** Stand by, satisfy.

> "I never saw a fellow worse bestead
> Or more afraid to fight." — *Henry VI.*, ii. 3.

6–10. **And fancies fond**, etc.

> "Confusedly about the silent bed
> Fantastick swarms of dreams were hovered,
> . . . . . .
> Som sacred, som profane, som false, som true.
> . . . . . .

They make no noise, but right resemble may
Th' unnumbered moats which in the sun do play."
— SYLVESTER'S *Du Bartas* (The Vacation).

6. **fond.** In old sense of foolish.

10. **pensioners.** Living upon the bounty of others, retinue. Possibly alluding to the famous body-guard of Elizabeth.

"And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be."
— *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1.

12. **divinest Melancholy.** We must keep to the Miltonic idea here: Thoughtfulness.

14. **To hit the sense.**

"Delicate odour as ever hit my nostril." — *Pericles*, iii. 2.

"From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharves." — *Antony and Cleopatra*, ii. 2.

18. **Prince Memnon's sister.** Memnon was the beautiful prince of the Ethiopians who came to help Priam. Milton makes the sister as beautiful. Homer alludes to Eurypylus as,

"The noblest
Of men, in form, whom I have ever seen,
Save Memnon." — *Odyssey*, xi.

19–21. **that starred Ethiop**, etc. Cassiope challenged the Nereids in a contest for beauty. They in anger induced Poseidon to send a ravenous monster into her country. Andromeda her daughter was about to be sacrificed to the monster when she was rescued by her lover Perseus. Cassiope was raised to heaven and turned into the constellation *Cassiopoeia.*

23–30. **bright-haired Vesta,** etc. Milton here creates the genealogy of Melancholy as he has done for Mirth in the previous poem. The emphasis upon the word *solitary* would seem to reveal the fact that Milton desired to reveal that Melancholy was the daughter of Solitude and the Vestal-affection or Domestic happiness.

33. **grain.** Color.

35. **stole.** Scarf.

cypress lawn. In early editions Milton printed this with a capital, indicating that the lawn was from Cyprus. In *Winter's Tale* Autolycus sings of his wares: —

> "Lawn as white as driven snow,
> Cyprus black as e'er was crow."

39. **commercing.** Communing.

42. **Forget thyself to marble.** Cf. *On Shakespeare*, 14 and note.

43. **leaden.** The star Saturn has a leaden or dispiriting influence on shepherds, or sons of the Muses. Cf. *Epitaphium Damonis*, 79, 80, and translation. (M.)

46. **Spare Fast.** Cf. sonnet *To Mr. Lawrence.*

51–54. **But, first and chiefest,** etc. Cf. *Ezekiel*, x. Milton names one of the four cherubs of Ezekiel's vision, Contemplation. By Contemplation one reached the heights of vision. (M.)

55, 56. **hist along. . . . 'Less Philomel,** etc. Telling the Silence to continue unless the Nightingale shall choose to break it. (M.)

> "Thou veiled in opening foliage, lead'st the throng
> Of feathered minstrels, Philomel! in song." — *Elegy* v.

59, 60. **While Cynthia,** etc. While the moon, entranced

with the song, is seen to check her pace over a particular oak tree. (M.) Milton has transferred the idea, "Dragon yoke," drawn by dragons, from the old Mythology of Demeter. The accustomed oak, seems to imply some particular oak in which the poet had seen the moon couched.

61–64. **Sweet bird,** etc. Masson cites: —

> "And yet, methinks in a thick thorn I hear
> A nightingale to warble sweetly clear."
> — SYLVESTER'S *Du Bartas* (First Week).

Cf. sonnet *To the Nightingale*, and note.

73–76. **Oft, on a plat of rising ground,** etc. The figure in the first couplet might have direct application to Horton, but that in the second could not; but we need not make literal identification of every allusion in a poem so rich in imagination. Masson says: "The sound of the eight o'clock bell from Christ Church is still one of the characteristics of Oxford, and is heard afar."

77. **air.** Weather.

83. **the bellman's drowsy charm,** etc. Charm, cry. The bellman was policeman and fireman in one, and at times shouted the state of the weather, as, "Half-past nine and a fine cloudy evening"; or he blessed the sleepers, as in Herrick's *The Bellman:* —

> "From noise and scare-fires rest ye free,
> From murder, *Benedicite!*
> From all mischances that may fright
> Your pleasing slumbers in the night." (M.)

85, 86. **Or let my lamp,** etc. A beautiful figure of Contemplation. Milton believed in the necessity of shade in which to grow ripe, and leisure in which to grow wise. He writes to Diodati:

"I am letting my wings grow, and preparing to fly, but my Pegasus has not yet feathers enough to soar aloft in the fields of air."

> "When Contemplation, like the night-calm felt
> Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and sends deep
> Into the soul its tranquilizing power."
>
> — WORDSWORTH, *Prelude*, v.

87. **outwatch the Bear.** Studying until the stars are put to flight.

88. **thrice great Hermes.** Hermes Trismegistus, a Greek appellation given to the Egyptian philosopher Thot.

88, 89. **unsphere the spirit of Plato.** Return Plato to the earth by understanding his works.

91, 92. **The immortal mind,** etc. An allusion to the *Phædo*, where the doctrine of immortality is discussed.

93–96. **And of those demons,** etc. The Mediæval doctrine of the four elements, Earth, Air, Fire, and Water.

97–100. **let gorgeous Tragedy,** etc. With Platonic Philosophy and Mediæval Alchemy we have the great truths of the Classic drama.

101, 102. **of later age,** etc. Shakespeare. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 131–134.

104–108. **Might raise Musæus.** Recover the equally great works which are lost. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 145–150.

109–115. **Or call up him,** etc. Chaucer, whose *Squire's Tale* is unfinished.

> "At Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie,
> Ther dwelt a king that werreied Russie,
> Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man:
> This noble king was cleped Cambuscan."

Cf. Tennyson : —

"Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still."

In the *Palace of Art* Tennyson has portraits hung above the throne of Contemplation : —

"For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song
And somewhat grimly smiled."

116–120. **great bards**, etc. Spenser and the *Faerie Queene.*

"Descend, prophetic Spirit ! that inspir'st
The human Soul of universal Earth
Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts of mighty poets."
— WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, Introduction.

122. **civil-suited.** Plainly attired, not in court costume.

124. **Attic boy.** Cephalus, who was in love with Eos, Morning.

134. **Sylvan.** Sylvanus, god of the woodlands.

135. **monumental.** Old.

142. **honeyed thigh.**

"Each bee with honey laden to the thigh." — DRAYTON, *Owl.*

146. **dewy-feathered.** "Feathers steeped in Lethean dew." (K.)

147–150. **And let some strange**, etc. Let some strange mysterious dream move to and fro at Sleep's wings, in airy stream. (M.)

156–166. **To walk**, etc. This should be read with *At a Solemn Music.* Milton is in admiration of the symbols of spiritual contemplation. Here is nothing of the Puritan.

158. **massy-proof.** The idea here is not quite clear. It may mean, sufficient to sustain the mass of roof, etc. Cf. Wordsworth, Sonnets, *Inside King's College Chapel.*

159. **storied.** Illustrating Scripture story in stained glass.

167–176. **And may at last my weary age**, etc.

> "O blest seclusion! when the mind admits
> The law of duty; and can therefore move
> Through each vicissitude of loss or gain
> Link'd in entire complacence with her choice;
> When youth's presumptuousness is mellow'd down,
> And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed;
> When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
> Upon the bows of sheltering leisure hung."
>
> — WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, iv.

> "If age had tamed the passions' strife,
> And fate had cut my ties of life,
> Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
> And rear again the chaplain's cell,
> Like that same peaceful hermitage,
> Where Milton long'd to spend his age."
>
> — SCOTT, *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto ii.

Mr. F. T. Palgrave, alluding to Keats' poem *Fancy*, says: "I know no other poem which so closely rivals the richness and melody, — and that in this very difficult and rarely attempted metre, — of Milton's *Allegro* and *Penseroso*."

1634–1645

ARCADES

(In Milton's own hand in the Cambridge Mss.)

The history of the Masque, its form and function in English literature, is varied and interesting. The men we most naturally associate with the Masque are, that incomparable Master of Revels Ben Jonson — its inventor, Inigo Jones its scene painter, and Henry Lawes the composer of its music. Early in the reign of Elizabeth, when the Miracle Plays and Mysteries were evolving into the Pageant and the drama of Shakespeare, there was also evolved a ceremonial in which actors represented allegorical characters and accompanied Lords and Ladies on great occasions for the purpose of lending interest by action, dialogue, music, and dance. In the reigns of James I. and Charles I. these entertainments were frequent and magnificently apportioned. Artists, musicians, poets, and managers were commissioned to prepare the pageant for a marriage, a birthday, a royal visitor, or the reception of distinguished foreigners, and the pastoral or idyl of Spenser appeared as a pastoral drama or masque. Jonson created no less than thirty masques between 1600 and 1635.

The Masque has its own laws as clearly defined as those of the drama itself. As in the Greek drama the central idea — the occasion — was familiar to the average spectator, so here the occasion with all its attendant incidents must be a familiar one. The poetry, music, and decorations must be used to intensify this occasion. The result is, as Taine says: "A true eye feast, like a procession of Titian."

In 1632 Puritanism gave a new impetus to such pageants by the publication of the famous *Histrio-Mastix: The Player's-Scourge*, in which the stage and all its associations were denounced as "the very pomp of the Divell." The result was a singular demonstration on the part of the lovers of good cheer, and the most gorgeous of all the royal masques was prepared by the Society of the Four Inns of Court, and presented in the Banqueting House at Whitehall, February, 1634. The masque was entitled *The Triumph of Peace*. In this masque, costing £21,000, Mr. Henry Lawes acted as master of music. We have already seen that while Milton was at Horton he was studying music in London; now this Mr. Lawes was his teacher, and it is probable that Milton took no little interest in this distinguished performance. Soon after this, another masque, *Cœlum Britannicum*, was given at the same place. Lawes arranged the music, and Inigo Jones had charge of the decorations. In it two sons of the Earl of Bridgewater acted, and it is through them that Lawes and Milton became associated in *Arcades*.

In Spenser's *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, we have the following: —

> "Ne less praiseworthie are the sisters three,
> The honor of the noble familie
> Of which I meanest boast myself to be
> And most that unto them I am so nie
> Phyllis, Charillis and Sweet Amaryllis."

These sisters are the three married daughters of Sir John Spencer. In Elizabeth's time the poet, then young, had dedicated to each, one of his early poems, *Muiopotmos*, *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, and *The Teares of the Muses*. The "sweet

Amaryllis" was Alice, who married Ferdinando, Lord Strange. In the dedication of his *Teares of the Muses* Spenser says: "The things that make ye so much honoured are your excellent beauty, your virtuous behavior, and your noble match with the very pattern of right nobility."

Lord Strange was a patron of literature and somewhat of a poet. He succeeded to the earldom of Derby, and on his death in 1594 his wife became known as Countess-Dowager of Derby. Spenser thus alludes to his death: —

> "Amyntas quite has gone, and lies full low,
> Having his Amaryllis left to mone.
> Helpe, O ye shepheards, helpe ye all in this,
> Helpe Amaryllis this her losse to mourne;
> Her losse is yours, your losse Amyntas is,
> Amyntas, floure of shepheards pride forlorne:
> He whilest he lived was the noblest swaine,
> That ever piped on an oaten quill."
>
> — *Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*

In 1600 she married Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Elizabeth. They purchased the beautiful estate of Harefield in Middlesex on the river Colne. In 1602 the Queen paid them a visit of four days, when masques of various kinds were given in her honor, and Burbidge's players acted for the first time Shakespeare's *Othello*. Masson says, "Shakespeare himself probably present and taking part." The avenue of elms where the pageant met the Queen was afterwards known as the "Queen's Walk."

In the reign of James I. Sir Thomas was made Lord Chancellor, and Lord and Lady Egerton were even more closely

identified with literature. Warton says: "The peerage book of the Countess is the poetry of her times." In 1617 his Lordship died. The Countess remained at Harefield and gave herself to deeds of charity and hospitality. The Countess' first husband had been married twice prior to his marriage to her, and her second husband had been married once before; their children had intermarried, and at the date of this masque she (at seventy) had numerous children and grandchildren. It was they who planned this entertainment in memory of the many which the venerable lady had witnessed. The two sons of the Earl of Bridgewater already mentioned as taking part in *Cœlum Britannicum*, now the Countess' grandsons, were pupils of Lawes, and it was therefore natural that they should want him to take charge of the music; it was also natural that he should ask Milton to furnish the text, — speeches and songs being a part of the extensive pageant, *Arcades*.

4. **mistook.** Milton is fond of those old forms. Cf. *Nativity*, 20; *Comus*, 558.

8–13. **Fame that . . . erst**, etc. An allusion to the tributes to the Countess by Spenser and those who had written masques in her honor.

14–19. **Mark what radiant state**, etc. An allusion to the actual surroundings of the Countess in the masque. (M.)

20. **Latona.** The mother of Apollo and Diana.

21. **the towered Cybele.** Cybele, the wife of Saturn and "the mother of the gods," wore a diadem of three towers. Cf. *Æneid*, vi. 784–786: —

"The Berycinthian mother rides tower-crowned through the

towns of Phrygia, proud of the gods that have sprung from her." Cf. *Faerie Queene*, IV. xi. 28: —

> "Old Cybele, arrayd with pompous pride,
> Wearing a Diademe embattild wide
> With hundred turrets," etc.

23. **Juno dares not give her odds.** Could not afford to give her any advantage in a contest for beauty. Masson gives an interesting interpretation of this passage. He says it should be read with the picture of the venerable lady before us as she appeared on that evening of the masque, throned, and surrounded by two generations of her descendants. "Does it not then mean, even now, the handsomest of her daughters must do her best to keep up with her."

26. **gentle.** Of gentle blood. Masson assumes that Lawes took the part of Genius of the Wood.

27. **honour.** Nobility of birth.

30, 31. **Divine Alpheus**, etc. Alpheus was the name of a river in Arcadia which ran underground for some distance. The legend was that Alpheus, a young hunter, was in love with a nymph Arethusa, and when she fled from him to Ortygia in Sicily, he was turned into a river and followed her under the sea, rising again in Ortygia where the waters blended with those of a fountain called after her, Arethusa. Cf. *Lycidas*, 85, 132, and *Æneid*, iii. 694–696: —

> "Alpheus the river of Elis made himself a secret passage under the sea; and he now, through thy mouth, Arethusa, blends with the waters of Sicily."

33. **silver-buskined Nymphs.** The ladies of the masque

wearing buskins, as did Diana and her nymphs. Cf. *Æneid*, i. 336, 337: —

"Tyrian maidens like me are wont to carry the quiver and tie the purple buskin high up the calf."

34. **free.** noble or generous.

46. **curl.** Drayton, in his *Polyolbion*, alluding to a grove says, "Where she her curled head unto the eye may show."

47. **wanton windings wove.** Cf. *Faerie Queene*, I. ii. 13, for alliteration: —

"Whose bridle rung with golden bels and bosses brave." (M.)

51. **thwarting.** Athwart or zigzag. (M.)

52. **cross dire-looking planet.** Alluding to the malignant influence of planets. Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 1: —

"Then no planets strike," etc.

53. **hurtful worm.** Cf. *Lycidas*, 46.

57. **tasselled horn.** Cf. *Faerie Queene*, I. viii. 3: —

"Then tooke that Squire an horn of bugle small,
Which hong adowne his side in twisted gold
And tasselles gay."

60. **murmurs.** Charms. Cf. *Comus*, 526.

63–73. **the celestial Sirens' harmony**, etc. Milton's idea of the music of the spheres is that each of the nine spheres is presided over by a Muse. As the spheres revolve, the Muses sing in harmony, while the Fates are turning the spindle of Necessity (adamantine) on which the threads of human and divine lives are wound. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, x. Chap. 14.

70. **unsteady Nature.** Such Nature seemed until the law of the whole was understood.

72, 73. **which none can hear**, etc. Cf. *Merchant of Venice*, v. 1 : —

> "But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it."

Cf. Tennyson, *Higher Pantheism* : —

"And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision — were it not He?"

81. **state.** Throne.

88, 89. **shady roof**, etc. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, I. i. 7 : —

> "Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommer's pride,
> Did spred so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
> Not perceable with power of any starr."

97–109. **Ladon's**, etc. Ladon was a river in Arcadia. *Lycœus*, *Cyllene*, and *Mœnalus*, mountains of Arcadia. *Syrinx*, a nymph who, being pursued by Pan, was changed into a reed of which Pan made his pipe.

Masson thinks the allusion here is to the masque of Ben Jonson's, which the Countess may have seen many years before at her home, Althorpe.

> "And the dame hath Syrinx' grace;
> O that Pan were now in place."

1634–1637–1645

COMUS

(Two copies, one, Lawes' stage-copy; and the other in Milton's own hand in the Cambridge Mss.)

Mr. J. R. Green says: "The historic interest of Milton's *Comus* lies in its forming part of a protest made by the more

cultured Puritans at this time against the gloomier bigotry which persecution was fostering in the party at large."

In respect of the time, nature of the occasion, and the characters involved, *Comus* and *Arcades* are closely connected. Sir John Egerton, first Earl of Bridgewater, was the son of the Countess-Dowager's second husband, Sir Thomas Egerton, by a previous marriage; he married Frances, daughter of the Countess by her first husband, Lord Strange. Their children were the two sons who acted in the masque *Cœlum Britannicum*, and who were concerned in the previous masque *Arcades;* two married daughters, and the beautiful Lady Alice, unmarried. Sir John was appointed Lord President of the Council in the principality of Wales in June, 1631. The official seat was at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire, built by the descendants of the Conqueror. The site of the castle, on the rocky heights above the green valley where two rivers meet, is beautiful and commands a magnificent outlook over the surrounding country. Its associations are those of the old wars of Welsh and Norman, the Wars of the Roses, and the history of the Prince of Wales.

> "Child of loud-throated War! the mountain stream
> Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
> Is come, and thou art silent in thy age."

The Earl did not assume the duties of office until 1634. The festivities of inauguration were enlivened by the performance of a masque in the great hall of the castle by members of the Earl's family, in the presence of a distinguished assembly of guests, on Michaelmas Night, September 29.

The association of the two young sons of the Earl with Lawes

in the *Cœlum Britannicum*, and with Lawes and Milton in *Arcades*, is sufficient to account for their respective parts in this distinguished pageant. Lady Alice took the part of The Lady, the two brothers the parts of First and Second Brother respectively, and Lawes himself that of the Attendant Spirit.

The name *Comus* was not applied to the masque during Milton's life. In the Cambridge Ms. it is — "A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales." In the Bridgewater Ms., which probably Lawes used as a stage-copy, the masque begins with a song of twenty lines, which in Milton's arrangement occupies lines 976–999; he made it a song of arrival by changing *To the Ocean* into *From the heavens*, and *Where young Adonis oft reposes* into *Where a cherub soft reposes*. It is evident from this that Lawes thought it would be more effective for the Attendant Spirit to descend into the wood with a song than with a speech. On his departure he sang the song as it is now in the epilogue.

We can never know whether or not Milton was present at this splendid performance, but we know that if he were it was not as the known author of the masque, for the authorship was a secret known only to Lawes and the Earl's family. But the author of such a success could not long be concealed. Inquiries were made in regard to the production; copies of the songs were asked for, and then of the entire masque. At last in 1637 Lawes published it with this title-page: —

"A Maske presented at Ludlow Castle 1634, on Michaelmas Night, before the Right Honourable John, Earl of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley, Lord President of Wales, and one of His Majesties' Most honorable Privy Counsell.

"'*Eheu quid volui misero mihi! floribus Austrum Perditus.*'

"London: Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the signe of the Three Pidgeons in Paul's Churchyard, 1637."

Masson thinks that the Latin motto on the title-page was supplied by Milton, and that in it he expressed a fear that he may have been foolish in letting the masque be published.

The volume was dedicated to the Earl's son, young Viscount Brackley, who took the part of First Brother (cf. p. 26). The music which Lawes composed for the songs in *Comus* exists in the Mss. of the British Museum, written in his own hand, with the heading: —

"*Five Songs set for a Mask presented at Ludlo Castle before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of the Marches: October* 1634."

Cf. sonnet, *To Mr. H. Lawes on his Airs.*

Milton first published the masque in the edition of 1645, with this title-page: *A Masque of the Same Author, presented at Ludlow Castle*, 1634, *before the Earl of Bridgewater, then President of Wales: Anno Dom.*, 1645. Lawes' dedication and the letter from Sir Henry Wotton were included (cf. p. 23).

Those who show "how to make careful literal identification of stories somewhere told ill and without art, with the same stories told over again by the masters, well and with the transfiguring effect of genius," tell us that this most original poem of its kind in English literature, owes much to Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*, Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, Ben Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, and Hendrik van der Puttens' Latin extravaganza *Comus*. What Tennyson said of this class of critics is to the point: —

"There is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that he, too, has no imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate."

On the whole, Time treats great things greatly. This reveals how close to the great world's heart noble poetry lies. It has been said that we are all poets when we read a poem well. This poem has been well read and worthily praised. Here is a great subject so penetrated by the imagination as to reveal its soul, its inward harmony with those "primal sympathies which having been, must ever be." It is perhaps the finest illustration in English literature of what Carlyle calls "*Musical Thought.*"

> "All we see before us passing,
> Sign and symbol is alone;
> Here, what thought can never reach to,
> Is by semblances made known;
> What man's word may never utter
> Done in act — in symbol shown." — GOETHE, *Faust.*

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "It is in the full-weighted dignity of the blank verse that the poem was then unparalleled. It was marked by a greater grandeur of style and thought, by a graver beauty, and a more exercised and self-conscious art than any poem of its character which England had as yet known. It belonged to the Elizabethan spirit, but it went beyond it, and made a new departure for English poetry.

All the kinds of poetry which Milton touched he touched with the ease of great strength, and with so much energy that

they became new in his hands. He put a fresh life into the masque, the sonnet, the elegy, the descriptive lyric, the song, the choral drama; and he created the epic in England."

Professor George Saintsbury says: "The versification is the versification of *Paradise Lost* and has a spring, a variety, a sweep and rush of genius which are but rarely present later. If poetry could be taught by the reading of it, then indeed the critic's advice to a poet might be limited to this: 'Give your days and nights to the reading of *Comus*.'"

Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton College, was perhaps the first to express to Milton his appreciation of the poem (cf. p. 23).

"*Comus*," says Hallam, "was sufficient to convince any one of taste and feeling that a great poet had arisen in England and one partly formed in a different school from his contemporaries."

Emerson says: "Milton is rightly dear to mankind, because in him — among so many perverse and partial men of genius — humanity rights itself: the old eternal goodness finds a home in his breast, and for once shows itself beautiful. Among so many contrivances to make holiness ugly, in Milton at least it was so pure a flame that the foremost impression his characters make is that of elegance. He said, 'Every free and gentle spirit, without the oath of chastity, ought to be born a knight: nor needed to expect the gilt spur, or the laying a sword upon his shoulder, to stir him up, by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect innocence.' This native honor never forsook him. It is the spirit of Comus, the loftiest song in praise of chastity that is in any language."

Mr. Henry Van Dyke says: "The Lady in *Comus* is the sweet embodiment of Milton's youthful ideal of virtue clothed

with the fairness of opening womanhood, armed with the sun-clad power of chastity."

"No courtier of Charles I.," says F. D. Maurice, "felt the attraction of the masques and entertainments in which the monarch and his wife delighted, more than the young Puritan. In the masque of 'Comus' the object was to exhibit in richer and more glorious verse than had ever been consecrated to courtly tastes and courtly indulgences, the battle of virtue with its tempters, and the Divine help which is sustaining it against them."

3. **insphered.** Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 88, and *Arcades*, 63–73.

4. **serene.** Some critics think this should be accented on the first syllable, but Masson prefers the usual pronunciation of the word.

7. **pestered.** From *in* and *pastorium*, a clog upon a horse at pasture, hence to encumber.

pinfold. Anglo-Saxon *pyndan*, to shut in; hence a pound in which stray beasts are put.

11. **enthroned.** A dissyllable.

13. **golden key.** Cf. *Lycidas*, 111.

16. **ambrosial weeds.** Celestial garments. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 120, and note.

20. **high and nether Jove.** Jupiter and Pluto. Cf. Homer, *Iliad*, ix. 457, Ζεῦς τε καταχθόνιος, Subterranean Jove, *i.e.* Pluto.

> "The air is Zeus, Zeus earth, and Zeus the heaven,
> Zeus all that is, and what transcends them all."
> —ÆSCHYLOS, *Fragment*, 293, Plumptre.

23. **unadornèd.** Supply before this, "otherwise."

25. **several.** Separate.

27. **this Isle,** etc. Great Britain. Cf. *Richard II.*, ii. 1:—

"This royal throne of kings," etc.

29. **quarters.** Divides.

blue-haired. An epithet relating to them as of the sea.

"The blue-haired ocean." — *Mansus.*

30. **this tract,** etc. Western Britain or Wales.

31. **noble Peer,** etc. The Earl of Bridgewater.

mickle. Much.

33. **old and haughty nation.** The Welsh, proud of being descendants of the Celts.

34. **nursed.** Educated.

43–45. **for I will tell,** etc. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1:—

"Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
. . . . . .
What masque, what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?"

45. **hall or bower.** Large public room and private apartments.

46–50. **Bacchus,** etc.

"Think not that wine against good verse offends;
The Muse and Bacchus have been always friends."

— *Elegy* vi.

48. **After the Tuscan mariners transformed.** After the transformation of the Tuscan mariners. Alluding to the seizure of Bacchus by pirates and their transformation into dolphins as given in Homer's *Hymn to Bacchus.*

50. **Circe's island.** Cf. *Odyssey*, x.

54–58. **This Nymph,** etc. This is a creation of Milton.

60. **Celtic and Iberian.** France and Spain.

65. **orient.** Shining.

67. **fond.** Foolish.

74. **Not once perceive,** etc. This is a variation from the Homeric account, where the companions of Ulysses are conscious of their state.

83. **spun out of Iris' woof.** Cf. *Paradise Lost*, xi. 244 : —

> "Iris had dipt the woof."

84–91. **a swain,** etc. A compliment to Henry Lawes, who was the actor of the part.

88. **of less faith.** Not less trustworthy than he is skilled in music. (M.)

92. **viewless now.** Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 516–518 : —

> "Each stair mysteriously was meant, not stood
> There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
> Viewless."

95–97. **the gilded car of day,** etc. Alluding to the ancient idea that the ocean hissed when the setting sun dropped into it.

98. **slope.** Declining, aslope.

105. **rosy twine.** Wreaths of roses.

110. **saws.** Maxims.

> "I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books," etc. — *Hamlet*, i. 5.

113. **spheres.** Cf. *Arcades*, 63–73, *Il Penseroso*, 88, 89, and notes.

116. **morrice.** A dance introduced by the Moors.

129. **Cotytto.** A Thracian divinity whose rites were associated with impurity.

132. **spets.** Old form of spits.

135. **Hecat'.** Hecate. Presiding genius of witchcraft, sorcery, etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, ii. 1: —

> "witchcraft celebrates
> Pale Hecate's offerings."

144. **fantastic round.** Cf. *L'Allegro*, 34, note.

151. **trains.** Allurements.

154. **dazzling spells**, etc. Some device is here resorted to for producing brilliant scintillations which the air (spongy) sucks up.

167. **Whom thrift**, etc. This line is omitted in ed. of 1673 and the next two are transposed.

175. **granges.** Granaries.

188. **grey-hooded Even.** Cf. Wordsworth, Sonnet: —

> "It is a beauteous evening calm and free:
> The holy time is quiet as a nun."

204. **single.** Pure, unmixed.

207. **calling shapes.** Cf. Fletcher, *Faithful Shepherdess* (Newton): —

> "Or voices calling me in dead of night
> To make me follow."

215. **Chastity.** Substituted by Milton for Charity.

232. **Meander.** A river of Asia Minor full of windings.

234. **nightingale.** Cf. *To the Nightingale*, note.

237. **Narcissus.** The beautiful youth in love for whom Echo pined away till only her voice was left, and who was changed into a flower.

253. **with the Sirens.** This is invented by Milton.

254. **flowery-kirtled.** Wreathed in flowers.

257–259. **Scylla . . . Charybdis.** Cf. *Æneid*, iii. 551–560.

267. **Unless.** Supply after this, "thou be."

290. **Hebe.** Goddess of youth.

293. **swinked.** Fatigued.

299. **element.** Air or sky.

301. **plighted.** Pleated, folded.

313. **bosky.** Woody.

315. **attendance.** For attendants.

317. **low-roosted.** The lark's nest is on the ground. That dear old poet, Izaak Walton, says: "At first the Lark, when she means to rejoice, to cheer herself and those that hear, she then quits the earth and sings as she ascends higher into the air; and having ended her heavenly employment grows mute

and sad to think she must descend to the dull earth which she would not touch but for necessity."

334. **disinherit.** Dispossess.

341, 342. **star of Arcady,** etc. Alluding to the Great Bear being as Tyrian Cynosure to the pole-star in it; Callisto, daughter to the king of Arcady, was changed into the Great Bear. The Tyrian sailors steered by Cynosure — the pole-star.

360. **To cast the fashion.** To anticipate the form.

366. **so to seek.** So helpless.

367. **unprincipled.** Unlearned.

380 **all to-ruffled.** Ruffled very much, completely.

382. **i' the centre.** Of the earth. Cf. *Hamlet*, ii. 2: —

> "I will find
> Where truth is hid, even though it were hid indeed
> Within the centre."

385. **Himself is his own dungeon.** Cf. *Samson Agonistes:* —

> "Thou art become (O worse imprisonment!)
> The dungeon of thyself."

393. **Hesperian tree.** That bore the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides watched by the dragon which Hercules slew.

395. **unenchanted.** Not to be enchanted.

398. **unsunned.** Hidden.

401. **wink on.** Fail to see.

407. **unowned.** Unprotected.

408. **Infer.** Argue.

413. **squint suspicion.** Spenser in *Faerie Queene*, III. xii. 15, says of Suspicion : —

"His rolling eies did never rest in place."

423. **trace.** Traverse.

unharboured. Not affording shelter.

432. **Some say no evil thing.** Cf. *Hamlet*, i, 1 : —

"Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad."

434, 435. **unlaid ghost**, etc. Cf. *Tempest*, v. 1 : —

"whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew."

436. **swart.** Black.

439. **Antiquity.** Up to this time allusion had been made only to Mediæval legend.

453. **So dear to Heaven.** Now the speaker passes into Platonic philosophy with a touch of Christianity. (M.)

459–469. **Till oft**, etc. Platonism. Cf. Byron, *Prisoner of Chillon* : —

"So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are."

Cf. Tennyson, *By an Evolutionist*, and Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

476–479. **How charming**, etc. An allusion to Plato, whom Milton admired.

491. **you fall on iron stakes else.** A caution to those who may be friendly. (M.)

494, 495. **Thyrsis**, etc. A compliment to Henry Lawes.

495–512. Note the rhyme scheme here. The purpose is to prolong to feeling of pastoralism by calling up the cadence of known English pastorals. (M.)

515–518. **What the sage poets**, etc. An allusion to the stories of Homer and Virgil.

520. **navel.** Centre.

526. **murmurs.** Spells.

529. **unmoulding.** Destroying.

531. **hilly crofts.** Upland pastures.

534. **stabled wolves.** Wolves in pens.

552. **Till an unusual stop.** Alluding to line 145.

553. **drowsy-flighted.** Startled from their drowse.

555–562. **At last**, etc. A beautiful compliment to the singing of Lady Alice.

604. **Acheron.** The infernal river, here used for Hell. Cf. Phineas Fletcher's *Locusts:* —

"All hell run out, and sooty flags display." (M.)

605. **Harpies.** Cf. *Æneid*, iii. 216–218: —

"Birds with maidens' faces, a foul discharge, crooked talons, and on their cheeks the pallor of eternal famine."

606. **Ind.** India: the region of black enchantments. (M.)

608. **curls.** Comus the voluptuary god wore curls. (K.)

619–628. **shepherd lad.** An allusion to Milton's friend Diodati. Cf. *Epitaphium Damonis* and *Elegies* i., vi

627. **simples.** Medicinal herbs.

635. **clouted shoon.** Mended shoes.

636. **Moly.** Cf. *Odyssey*, x. By this plant Ulysses is made proof from the charms of Circe.

> "The root is black,
> The blossom white as milk. Among the gods
> Its name is Moly."

638. **Hæmony.** Milton invents this. It may be from *Hæmonia*, the old name for Thessaly, the land of magic. (M.)

646. **lime-twigs.** Snares smeared with bird lime.

655. **like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke.** Cf. *Æneid*, viii. 251–253, where the giant Cacus, son of Vulcan, is alluded to: —

> "Cacus, half man, half brute.
> . . . . . .
> This monster's father was Vulcan. Vulcan's
> Were the murky fires that he disgorged from his mouth."

661. **Daphne.** Who when Apollo pursued her was turned into a laurel tree.

672. **julep.** Mint julep, here a cordial.

675. **Nepenthes.** A drug which Helen gave to Menelaus. Cf. *Odyssey*, iv. 220: —

> "Helen, Jove-born dame,
> With the wine they drank mingled a drug,
> An antidote to grief and anger."

wife of Thone. Polydamna an Egyptian.

698. **vizored.** Disguised.

707. **those budge doctors of the Stoic fur.** Budge was an old name for lamb's fur, as worn on scholastic gowns.

Stoic. Who despised the pleasures of the senses.

708. **Cynic tub.** Of Diogenes.

711. **unwithdrawing.** Liberal.

719. **hutched.** Put in a chest.

721. **pulse.** Beans, pease, etc.

739–755. **Beauty is Nature's coin,** etc. Cf. Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, i.–vi.

750. **sorry grain.** Poor color.

751. **ply the sampler.** Make needlework for samples. Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii. 2 :—

> "We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
> Have with our needles created both one flower,
> Both on one sampler."

756–761. **I had not thought,** etc. These lines are an *Aside.*

760. **bolt.** Refine.

791. **fence.** Thrusts. The figure is from fencing.

800–806. **She fables not,** etc. These lines are an *Aside.*

803. **wrath of Jove.** In the war of the Titans.

804. **Erebus.** Infernal regions.

809, 810. **'tis but the lees,** etc. An allusion to the old idea that the gases of the stomach rose and affected the brain.

816. **rod reversed.** According to the old customs of undoing

the spell by reversing the rod and pronouncing the words of the charm backwards. (M.)

822. **Melibœus.** Common name for shepherds. Here for Geoffrey of Monmouth.

823. **soothest.** Truest.

824–827. **There is a gentle Nymph,** etc. Milton at one time meditated a poem on the settlement of Britain. He wrote a history of Britain as far as the Conquest. He here alludes to the old legend in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Britons*, which makes Brutus the second founder of Britain. One of his sons, Locrine, although he was engaged to Guendolen of Cornwall, fell in love with Estrildis, a German princess. Guendolen's father forced him to marry her, but Estrildis lived in his palace and bore him a daughter, Sabre, or Sabrina. He divorced Guendolen and acknowledged Estrildis and her daughter, but Guendolen rallied the Cornish people to her support, defeated Locrine and commanded Estrildis and her daughter to be drowned in the river, now called Severn from the daughter's name. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, II. x. 14–19.

> "The one she slew upon the present floure;
> But the sad virgin, innocent of all,
> Adowne the rolling river she did poure,
> Which of her name now Severne men do call." (19.)

It was a very effective compliment to the people of Wales. Milton varies the legend a little in the interest of Sabrina.

835. **aged Nereus' hall.** Milton blends classic mythology with the British legend. Nereus was father of the sea nymphs, Nereids.

838. **asphodil.** A flower which grew in the Elysian fields.

845. **Helping all urchin blasts.** The urchin or hedgehog was the form often assumed by mischievous elves. Helping is curing. Cf. *Tempest*, ii. 2. Caliban alluding to Prospero's Spirits says: —

> "Sometimes like apes they mow and chatter at me,
> And after bite me; then like hedgehogs which
> Lie tumbling in my barefoot way," etc.

846. **meddling elf.** One of the followers of Robin Goodfellow. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 105, and note.

852. **old swain.** Melibœus.

858. After praising the speeches, Macaulay says: "The interruptions of the dialogue impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. . . . When he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, he rises even above himself. . . . He stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty."

863. **amber-dropping.** Amber-colored and dripping with wet.

867–889. **Listen and appear to us,** etc. Allusions to the classical mythology here are: *Oceanus*, god of the great stream which encircled the habitable world; *Neptune* is a later sea king. *Tethys* is the wife of Oceanus and mother of the river gods. *Nereus*, see note to line 835. *Carpathian Wizard* is *Proteus*, who could change into any shape; he lived in a cave in Carpathus in the Mediterranean. He was a sea shepherd and his flock was of sea calves. Cf. Virgil, *Georgics*, iv.: —

"In the sea gods' Carpathian gulf there lives a seer, Proteus, of

the sea's own hue, who takes the measure of the mighty deep with his fishes, even with his harnessed two-legged steeds."

Triton, son of Neptune, rode on sea horses, blowing his "wreathed horn."

Glaucus was a fisherman who, having eaten a certain herb, was changed into a sea god, and roved about islands uttering oracles for sailors. *Leucothea* (white goddess) was Ino, daughter of Cadmus. She threw herself and her son into the sea and was changed into a sea deity. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, xi. 135: —

"Leucothea waked and with fresh dews embalmed the Earth."

Her son was god of ports and harbors. *Thetis*, one of the daughters of *Nereus*, was mother of Achilles; Homer calls her *silverfooted*. *Parthenope* and *Ligea* were Sirens; the tomb of the former was at Naples. The golden comb seems to suggest the mermaids of northern mythology seen "combing their golden hair." (M.)

"With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair."
—TENNYSON, *The Mermaid*.

893. **azurn.** Azure.

894. **turkis.** Turquoise.

895. **strays.** Moved along by tide.

897. **printless feet.** Cf. *Tempest*, v. 1: —

"And ye that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune."

921. **Amphitrite's bower.** Chamber of Amphitrite, the wife of Neptune.

923. **Anchises' line.** Anchises was the founder of the line through Æneas, Brutus, etc.

929. **tresses.** Foliage on thy banks.

934. **lofty head.** Source of the river, and possibly put for the river itself.

958. **Back, shepherds.** The country dancers are interrupted by the arrival of this party.

959. **sun-shine holiday.** Compare this merrymaking with that in *L'Allegro*, 92–98.

960. **without duck or nod.** They are now to lay aside their country ways and assume the manners of the courtly dancers.

976–979. **To the ocean now I fly,** etc. Cf. Ariel's song in *Tempest*, v. 1: —

> "Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
> In the cowslip's bell I lie;
> There I couch when owls do cry.
> On the bat's back I do fly," etc.

Compare these closing lines of *Comus* with "Thence through the gardens," etc. Cf. Tennyson's *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*.

981. **the gardens,** etc. Cf. 393, note.

990. **cedarn.** Of cedar.

998. **Beds of hyacinth.** Cf. *Faerie Queene*, iii. vi. 46. Adonis lies

> "Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery."

1002. **Assyrian queen.** Astarte, identified with Venus here.

1004. **Cupid,** etc. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, iii. vi. 50: —

> "And his trew love fairè Psyche with him playes," etc.

1009. **side.** Cf. Tennyson's *Rizpah*: —

"They are mine — not
Theirs — they had moved in my side."

1010. **blissful twins.** Spenser gives but one child to Psyche: —

"Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche late."

1017. **corners of the moon.** Cf. *Macbeth*, iii. 5: —

"Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound."

1022. **Or, if Virtue feeble were.** Masson gives an interesting anecdote in connection with the last two lines of *Comus*. When Milton was returning home from his continental travel in 1639, he met in Geneva a teacher of Italian, Cerdogni or Cardouin, a Neapolitan by birth, and probably a Protestant. Cardouin asked Milton to write in his album. He complied and wrote —

"If Virtue feeble were
Heaven itselfe would stoope to her.
"Cœlum non animum muto dum trans mare curro.
"JOANNES MILTONIUS.
"Junii 10, 1639. Anglus."

Masson says, "If we combine the English lines with the Latin addition, it is as if he said: 'The closing words of my *Comus* are a permanent maxim with me.'"

The album was sold in Geneva in 1834 for a few shillings, and after passing through several hands came into the possession of Hon. Charles Sumner. It is now in the Sumner collection, Harvard College Library.

Variations in Stage-Directions

Stage-directions in the Cambridge Ms., afterwards changed by Milton, are: Instead of the opening stage-direction, "The Attendant Spirit *descends or enters*," we have —

A Guardian Spirit or Dæmon.

After line 92: *Goes out.* — Comus *enters, with a charming-rod and glass of liquor, with his rout all headed like some wild beasts, their garments some like men's and some like women's. They come in a wild and antic fashion. Intrant,* κωμάζοντες.

After 144: *The Measure, in a wild, rude, and wanton Antic.*

After 147, where there is no stage-direction now, we have: *They all scatter.*

After 243, where there is no stage-direction now, we have: *Comus looks in and enters.*

After 330: *Exeunt.* — *The* Two Brothers *enter.*

After 489: *He hallos: the* Guardian Dæmon *hallos again and enters in the habit of a shepherd.*

After 658. The present reading is the same as in the Cambridge Mss., with the exception that *Soft music* is omitted from first sentence; and the second reads: Comus *is discovered with his rabble, and* The Lady *set in an enchanted chair: she offers to rise.*

After 813: *The* Brothers *rush in, strike his glass down; the Shapes make as though they would resist, but are all driven in.* Dæmon *enters with them.*

After 866, where there is no stage-direction now, we have: *To be said*, and after 937 there is, *Song ends.*

After 957: *Exeunt. — The Scene changes, and then is presented Ludlow town, and the President's Castle; then enter Country Dances and such like gambols, etc. At these sports the* Dæmon, *with the* Two Brothers *and* The Lady *enter. The* Dæmon *sings.*

After 965, we have merely, *2 Song.*

1637–1638–1645

LYCIDAS

(In Milton's hand in the Cambridge Mss.)

For three years after the composition of *Comus* Milton lived a quiet life at Horton with books and Nature, but the year 1637 brought him his first great grief. His mother, who had been an embodiment of woman nobly planned, passed away on the third of April. She was of sweet and tender disposition, of gracious household ways, and we must believe that she had much to do in opening the mind of her son to beautiful thoughts. We believe he had her in mind when he wrote the following: —

" Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like Folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made

Occasionally; and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seats
Build in her loveliest, and create an army
About her, as a guard angelic, placed."
— *Paradise Lost*, viii. 546–559.

She was buried in the Parish Church of Horton. On the plain slab in the floor of the chancel may be read — "*Heare lyeth the Body of Sara Milton, the wife of John Milton, who died the 3rd of April, 1637.*"

It is worth while here to refer to those other noble tributes to mothers in the works of Wordsworth and Tennyson: —

"Early died my honoured mother, she who was the heart
And hinge of all our learnings and our lives:
. . . . . .
She, not falsely taught,
Fetching her goodness rather from times past,
Than shaping novelties for times to come,
Had no presumption, no such jealousy,
Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust
Our nature, but had virtual faith that He
Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,
Doth also for our nobler part provide
Under His great correction and control,
As innocent instincts, and as innocent food:
. . . . . .
This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
From anxious fear of error or mishap
And evil overweeningly so called.
. . . . . .
Such was she. Not from faculties more strong
Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,

And spot in which she lived, and through a grace
Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
A heart that found benignity and hope,
Being itself benign."

— *Prelude*, v.

"'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.'"

— *The Princess*, vii.

Hardly had Milton gathered himself from the shock of this affliction when he was called to face another in the death of his college friend Edward King. In the association of Milton and King we have an illustration of those significantly touching

attachments of man to man which have so often quickened the pulse and chastened the spirit of English poetry; as in the case of Spenser and Sidney, Shakespeare and "W. H., the only begetter of the Sonnets," Shelley and Keats, Tennyson and Hallam, Arnold and Clough, Wordsworth and Coleridge.

King was one of the students of Milton's time of whom much was to be expected. He had written some respectable Latin verse, and was appointed to a Fellowship in Christ's College. In the long vacation of 1637 he started on a visit to his family and friends in Ireland, and while passing from Chester to Dublin the vessel struck on the rocks, and he, with other passengers, was drowned. A volume of memorial verses was proposed at the reassembling of the College in October, and early in 1638 was published in two sections, one in Latin and Greek, and the other in English; the title of the latter was "*Obsequies to the Memorie of Mr. Edward King, Anno Dom., 1638.*" In this collection Milton's poem stands last.

Among the Sicilian and Alexandrian Greeks there arose a form of poetry which idealized country life, in which the beauty and freshness of simple primary affections and passions were the centre of interest. Theocritus the Syracusan was the most important of the creators of this poetry.

> "Nay, but, Galatea, come!
> Come thence, and having come, forget henceforth,
> As I (who tarry here), to seek thy home!
> And may'st thou love with me to feed the flocks
> And milk them and to press the cheese with me,
> Curdling their milk with rennet."
>
> —THEOCRITUS.

They gave the name Eclogues (Eklogai), Goatherd's Tales, to these simple productions.

Virgil copied from the Greeks and gave the name Bucolic or Pastoral to his work. He says: "Muses of Sicily, let us strike a somewhat loftier strain . . . at length a new generation is descending from heaven." And again: "First of all, my muse deigned to disport herself in the strains of pastoral Syracuse, and disdained not to make her home in the woods, goddess as she was."

— *Eclogues* iv. and vi.

"Cruel Alexis! have you no care for my songs? no pity for me? You will drive me to death at last. It is the hour when even cattle are seeking the shade and its coolness — the hour when even green lizards are sheltering themselves in the brakes, and Thestylis is preparing for the reapers, as they come back spent with the vehement heat, her savory mess of garlic and wild thyme."

— *Eclogue* ii.

As Virgil copied from the Greeks, so the Italians of the Renaissance imitated Virgil, but added an element of moralizing verging on satire. With the Renaissance the pastoral entered England, with Sidney and Spenser it reached its finest type in the *Arcadia*, *The Shepheard's Calendar*, and *The Faerie Queene*.

> "Shepheards, that wont, on pipes of oaten reed,
> Oft times to plaine your loves concealed smart;
> And with your piteous layes have learnd to breed
> Compassion in a countrey lasses hart
> Hearken, ye gentle shepheards, to my song,
> And place my dolefull plaint your plaints emong."
>
> — *Astrophel.*

Writing to a friend at this time, Milton says: "What God has resolved concerning me I know not, but this I know at least — He has instilled into me a vehement love of the beautiful. . . . You ask what I am thinking of? So may the Good Deity help me; of immortality — I am pluming my wings and meditating flight." He may have been meditating upon his epic when the death of his friend called him away for a time. The poem is pastoral in form, with prologue and epilogue, and a body of monody by a shepherd mourning. That Milton's feelings tended to cause him to violate this form we are sure, as twice he checks himself for passing beyond the limits of a pastoral.

Alluding to the mingling of national and social philosophy with the pastoral mourning, Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "One of its strange charms is its solemn undertone rising like a religious chant through the elegiac music. . . . the sense of Christian religion pervading the classical imagery." The tone of religious earnestness, which is manifest as a subordinate element in the early poems, becomes primary in the poems of the Horton period. It is in the *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* as a plea for a "reasonable life"; in *Comus* as a condemnation of the license of the court, and a hymn in praise of temperance and chastity; in the *Lycidas* as a fierce denunciation of the corruptions of the church — that "grim wolf with privy paw."

Lowell says: "The strain heard in the 'Nativity Ode,' in the 'Solemn Music,' and in 'Lycidas' is of a higher mood, as regards metrical construction, than anything that had thrilled the English ear before, giving no uncertain augury of him who was to show what sonorous metal lay silent till he touched the keys in the epical organ-pipes of our various languages."

Emerson says: "No individual writer has been an equal benefactor of the English language by showing its capabilities."

1. **Yet once more**, etc. Three years had elapsed since Milton had written *Comus*. He had written nothing in the interim.

3–5. **I come to pluck**, etc. The symbolism here evidently is that he is compelled to write when but for the sad event he would be gathering himself for work which would merit the laurel wreath in due season.

8, 9. **Lycidas is dead . . . young Lycidas**. The name Lycidas is taken from classic pastorals by Ovid and Virgil. The reflection here is common. Cf. Spenser, *Astrophel*: —

> "Young Astrophel, the pride of shepheard's praise,
> Young Astrophel, the rusticke lasses love."

15. **Begin then**. Cf. Spenser, *Teares of the Muses*: —

> "Rehearse to me, ye sacred Sisters ninè," etc.

sacred well. The Pierian Spring at the foot of Olympus, the seat of the Homeric Pantheon.

19–22. **So may some gentle Muse**, etc. The prayer here expressed by Milton that he himself would merit some memorial has been generously answered.

23–36. **For we were nursed**, etc. A beautiful setting of their life at Cambridge.

28. **grey-fly**. Cleg, or horse-fly.

34–36. **Rough Satyrs**, etc. Masson thinks there may be an

allusion here to some of Milton's undergraduate associates, and that *old Damœtus* may refer to some Fellow or tutor.

40. **gadding.** Wandering, straggling.

46. **taint-worm.** The name *tainct* was once given to a small red spider, deadly to cattle. (M.)

49. **Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.** Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, i. 1: —

> "More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
> When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear."

50–55. **Where were ye,** etc. Cf. Virgil, *Eclogue* x.: —

"What forests, what lawns were your abode, virgin nymphs of the fountains, when Gallus was wasting under an unworthy passion? What, indeed? for it was not any spot in the ridges of Parnassus or of Pindus that kept you there; no, nor Aonian Aganippe."

Virgil imitated the first idyl of Theocritus, but Masson agrees with Keightley that Milton excels Virgil in imitation.

52. **the steep,** etc. This is an allusion to some particular mountain in Wales.

54. **Mona.** The fastness of the Druids in Anglesey.

55. **Deva.** The Dee. The old boundary between England and Wales. Cf. *Faerie Queene*, I. ix. 4: —

> "From whence the river Dee, as silver cleene,
> His tombling billowes rolls with gentle rore."

Chester, the port from which King sailed, is on the Dee.

58–63. **What could the Muse,** etc. Orpheus, the son of Calliope, because he continued to grieve for Eurydice (cf. note,

L'Allegro, 145), was torn to pieces by the offended Thracian women in their Bacchanalian orgies. The Muses buried fragments of the body at the foot of Mount Olympus, but his head was thrown into the river Hebrus, which carried it to the island of Lesbos, where it was buried. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, vii. 32–39: —

> "But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
> Of Bacchus, and his revellers, the race
> Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard
> In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
> To rapture, till the savage clamour drown'd
> Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse
> Defend her son."

67–69. **Were it not better,** etc. To lead a life of ease and pleasure. *Amaryllis* and *Neæra* are names of shepherds' sweethearts in the old pastorals.

70. **clear.** Aspiring.

75. **blind Fury.** Atropos.

77. **touched my trembling ears.** The idea here seems to be that Milton was over-anxious for fame. Cf. Virgil, *Eclogue* vi. "Cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthius aurem vellit, et admonuit," which Conington translates, "When I was venturing to sing of kings and battles, the Cynthian god touched my ear and appealed to my memory." Here touching the ear is symbolic of quickening the memory.

79. **glistering foil.** Temporary reputation, which might like the shining tinsel wrap a very cheap article.

81, 82. **But lives,** etc. Compare this alliance of Heaven with true fame, with the idea in the last two lines of *Comus*.

85, 86. **O fountain Arethuse.** The nymph of the fountain of Arethusa in Sicily was the Muse of pastoral poetry as revealed in Theocritus: Mincius was a river of Italy near which Virgil, the type of Latin pastoral poet, was born. Cf. Virgil, *Eclogue* vii.: —

"Mincius fringing his green banks with a border of vocal reeds."

87, 88. **That strain,** etc. The words of Apollo were more profound than the simple pastoral.

89, 90. **the Herald of the sea,** etc. In the judicial inquiry in regard to the death of Lycidas Triton came as representative of Neptune.

93. **rugged.** Ragged. Cf. *L'Allegro*, 9.

96. **Hippotades.** Æolus, the god of the winds, was son of Hippotes.

99. **Panope.** One of the Nereids.

101. **Built in the eclipse.** Cf. *Macbeth*, iv. 1: —

"Slips of yew
Slivered in the moon's eclipse"

are one of the ingredients of the witches' hell-broth.

103–107. **Next, Camus,** etc. The genius of the river Cam and of Cambridge University. Masson gives the note in Plumptre's Greek translation of *Comus* in explanation of the garb of Camus: —

"The mantle is as if made of the plant 'river spruce' which floats copiously on the Cam: the *bonnet* of the river-sedge, distinguished by vague marks traced somehow over the middle of the leaves and serrated at the edge of the leaves, after the

fashion of the *Ai*, *Ai* of the hyacinth." The hyacinth was the flower in whose petals the Greeks saw the *Ai*, *ai*. Alas! Alas!

Inwrought. In the Ms. this is "scrawled o'er."

107. **pledge.** Hope, an allusion to the expectation of what King would have done had he lived. Cf. *In Memoriam*, LXXII.: —

> "The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
> The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath," etc.

108–131. **Last came**, etc. Cf. *Matthew*, iv. 18–20. The reader should consult Ruskin's comment on this passage in "King's Treasures" (*Sesame and Lilies*). Masson says, "St. Peter, here called by name suggesting his original occupation as fisherman and with occult reference to the fact that Lycidas had perished at sea." The tradition of the Church as to the office of St. Peter is symbolized by the possession of the two keys, one for opening and the other for shutting. "Though not a lover of *false* bishops, Milton *was* a lover of true ones." — RUSKIN. "And were the punishment and misery of being a prelate-bishop terminated only in the person, and did not extend to the affliction of the whole diocese, if I would wish anything in the bitterness of soul to mine enemy, I would wish him the biggest and fattest bishopric." — *Apology for Smectymnuus.*

112. **mitred locks.** Milton here allows St. Peter to speak with episcopal authority. "The Lake-Pilot is here in Milton's thoughts the type and head of true episcopal power." — RUSKIN.

113. **How well could I have spared**, etc. This passage concluding in line 129 is in many respects the most significant in the poem. A more graphic picture of the incapacity of the

hireling church can hardly be conceived. It reveals how surely though quietly the bow was being strung which only the sinews of Ulysses could draw, and which would send the arrow to the mark when the time came. We wonder how it could have escaped the condemnation of those against whom it was directed. Emerson says: "Questions that involve all social and personal rights were hasting to be decided by the sword, and were searched by eyes to which the love of freedom, civil and religious, lent new illumination."

115. **Creep, and intrude, and climb.** Ruskin says: "Do not think Milton uses these three words to fill up his verse. He needs all the three; specially those three, and no more than those. — 'Creep,' and 'intrude,' and 'climb,' no other words would or could serve the turn, and no more could be added." There are three classes here: First, the cunning; second, the insolently bold; and third, those who are ambitious to gain high dignities.

119. **Blind mouths.** "Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character; in the two great offices of the Church — those of bishop and pastor. A Bishop means one who sees. A Pastor means one who feeds. The most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed — to be a Mouth." — RUSKIN. Cf. Wordsworth, *Prelude*, i. 210, 211: —

"ballad tunes
Food for the hungry ears of little ones."

124. **scrannel.** Screeching. Coined by Milton. (M.)

125. **The hungry sheep look up,** etc. Cf. Spenser, *Shepheard's Calendar* (Maye): —

Piers. "Those faytours little regarden their charge,
While they, letting their sheepe runne at large,
Passen their time that should be sparely spent,
In lustihede and wanton meryment.
Thilke same bene shepeheardes for the Devil's stedde,
That playen while their flockes be unfedde."

Cf. Ben Jonson, *Pan's Anniversary*: —

Shep. "Now each return unto his charge,
And though today you've lived at large,
And well your flocks have fed their fill,
Yet do not trust your hireling still.
See yond' they go, and timely do
The office you have put them to;
But if you often give this leave,
Your sheep and you they will deceive."

Cowper must have had these lines in mind when he wrote: —

"When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins;
The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink."
— *Expostulation.*

126. **wind and rank mist.** Unsubstantial and unwholesome doctrines. "This is to meet the vulgar answer that 'if the poor are not looked after in their bodies, they are in their souls; they have spiritual food.'" — RUSKIN.

128. **grim wolf.** The Church of Rome was growing by the converts it made, and there was little opposition.

130. **that two-handed engine.** This passage has puzzled the critics. Some think it refers to the axe to be laid at the root of the trees, or the sword which Michael the Archangel "brandished with huge two-handed sway" in the war in Heaven, while others think it alludes to the sword of the Apocalypse. It evidently has a Biblical origin. Masson thinks it may mean the Two Houses of Parliament, from the fact that not for eight years had Charles summoned a Parliament. When we consider what an "engine" the Parliament of 1640 was, we may not consider this interpretation far-fetched.

132. **Return, Alpheus,** etc. After the digression the pastoral note is resumed by calling upon the lover of Arethusa. Cf. line 85.

136. **use.** Stay.

138. **swart star.** The malignant Dog-star Sirius.

sparely. Rarely.

142–151. **Bring the rathe primrose,** etc. Ruskin in *Modern Painters*, Vol. II., "Of Imagination Penetrative," page 168, has a somewhat singular comment on the first seven lines of this beautiful passage. It seems to contradict the teaching of Vol. I. He says: "Compare Milton's flowers in *Lycidas* with Perdita's. In Milton it happens, I think generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is

part of iron and part of clay." He then marks the lines as follows: —

142. (Imagination.)
143. (Nugatory.) Unimaginative.
144. (Fancy.)
145. (Imagination.)
146. (Fancy, vulgar.)
147. (Imagination.)
148. (Mixed.)

"Then hear Perdita: —

> "'O, Proserpina,
> For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
> From Dis's wagon. Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty. Violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
> Most incident in maids.'" — *Winter's Tale.*

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of the flower . . . and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains upon them and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would have been the most precious to us of all."

Cf. Spenser, *Shepheard's Calendar* (April): —

> "Bring hither the pincke and purple cullambine,
> With gelliflowres;

Bring coronations, and sops-in-wine,
Worn with paramoures:
Strowe me the ground with daffadowndillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lillies;
The pretie pawnce,
And the chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flower-delice."

Cf. Keats, *Endymion*, book ii. 412–418: —

"the ivy mesh,
Shading its Ethiop berries; and the woodbine,
Of velvet leaves and bugle-blooms divine;
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn blush;
And virgins bower, trailing airily;
With others of the sisterhood."

Cf. Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, LXXXIII.: —

"Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire."

142. **rathe.** Early. Our word *rather* is the comparative of this adjective.

143. **crow-toe.** Crowfoot violet.

151. **laureate hearse.** Laurelled tomb.

153. **dally with false surmise.** Think that the body is entombed, though really it is washed about by the sea.

156–162. **beyond the stormy Hebrides,** etc. King was shipwrecked on the Irish coast. Milton sketches the wanderings of the body to the Scottish coast — to Land's End, Cornwall — the

fabled abode of *Bellerus*, where the "guarded mount," St. Michael's, looks toward Cape Finistere and the castle (hold) of Bayona on the south.

163. **Look homeward.** Here Michael, who has been looking toward Naumancos and Bayona's hold, is asked to direct his gaze toward England.

164. **ye dolphins**, etc. An allusion to the rescuing of Arion, whom the sailors had thrown overboard.

165–181. **Weep no more**, etc. Compare these lines with 198–219 of *Epitaphium Damonis*.

169. **repairs.** Raises again.

170. **new-spangled ore.** Renewed golden splendor.

173. **Through the dear might of Him**, etc. Note the appositeness to the whole subject of the poem in this reference to Christ's power over the waves. (M.)

176. **unexpressive.** Inexpressibly sweet. (M.)

181. **And wipe the tears**, etc. Cf. *Rev.* vii. 17, xxi. 4.

183. **thou art the Genius**, etc. Cf. *Epitaphium Damonis*, 207–211.

186. **uncouth.** Unknown, rather than rude, seems to be the idea here.

1655–1673

On his Blindness

In spite of the fact that the breach between Royalist and Puritan was daily becoming wider, Milton, having gained the approval of his father, prepared to carry out a long-cherished plan of visiting Italy. His passport was furnished by Sir Henry

Wotton, Provost of Eton, and early in May he crossed the Channel, "to fresh woods and pastures new." "A more impressive Englishman never left our shores," says Augustine Birrell. "Sir Philip Sidney perhaps approaches him nearest. Beautiful beyond praise, and just sufficiently conscious of it to be careful not to appear at a disadvantage — a gentleman, a scholar, a poet, a musician, and a Christian." In Paris he was presented to the English Ambassador of Charles, and by him was introduced to "that most learned man," Hugo Grotius, Ambassador from the Queen of Sweden. He remained in Paris but a short time, for his dreams of classic Italy lured him on. In August we find him in Florence. Here he was received with the kindest hospitality by many of the young men in the famous literary circles, and was praised with a true Italian fervor. He met the famous Galileo — old, feeble, and blind — at his villa in Arcetri. This was the most impressive of all his experiences in Italy. From Florence he went to Rome, where he refreshed his memory of Horace, Livy, and Virgil by visiting places associated with their life and work. He heard Leonora Baroni, the first singer of the world at that time, and expressed his enthusiasm for her art in Latin epigrams. In five sonnets written in Italian we have another illustration of Milton's worship at the shrine of Italian beauty. He was captivated by the "magnetic movements and love-darting dark brow" of some daughter of this land of art and beauty. What a lover he was is splendidly illustrated in the sonnet which Masson has translated: —

> "Young, gentlenatured, and a simple wooer,
> Since in myself I stand in doubt to fly,

Lady, to thee my heart's poor gift would I
Offer devoutly; and by tokens sure
I know it faithful, fearless, constant, pure,
In its conceptions graceful, good, and high.
When the world roars and flames the startled sky;
In its own adamant it rests secure;
As free from chance and malice ever found,
And fears and hopes that vulgar minds confuse,
As it is loyal to each manly thing
And to the sounding lyre and to the muse,
Only in that part is it not so sound
Where Love hath set in it his cureless sting."

He writes to his friend Diodati and confides in him the secret of the passionate love. On returning home he learned at Geneva that soon after he left England Diodati had died. This sadness, together with the feeling that it was unpatriotic for him to be in pleasure when his friends at home were struggling for freedom, hurried him to England. He revealed his sense of loss at the death of his friend in a Latin elegy, *Epitaphium Damonis*. Cf. Cowper's translation of this poem.

Mr. Richard Garnett says: "Four times has a great English poet taken up his abode in 'the paradise of exiles,' and remained there until deeply imbued with the spirit of the land. The Italian residence of Byron and Shelley, of Landor and Browning, has infused into English literature a new element which has mingled with its inmost essence."

On returning to England in August, 1639, Milton did not take active part in the controversies of the time, but settled in studious life. After a short visit to Horton he took lodgings in St. Bride's, Fleet Street. He soon found these too small, and

the next year he removed to Aldersgate Street, outside the city walls, near Islington, a quiet and restful quarter. Here he planned a poem which should be a monument to the English language — the first attempts at *Paradise Lost.* Here, too, he became tutor to his nephews and a few other boys. What his ideas of education were may be found in his *Tractate on Education*, written in 1644. In it occurs his famous definition: "I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all offices, both private and public, of peace and war."

In 1641 he began a series of pamphlets on social and political questions, the first of which was *Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline in England.*

The Civil War had begun, and Milton decided that he could be of more assistance to the Parliamentarians with the pen than in other ways. The battle at Edgehill had been fought October 23, 1642, and the Cavaliers were advancing toward London. All was confusion and excitement in the city when news came that the enemy had been checked at Brentford. Milton had reason to think the Cavaliers would seek him out, and half in jest, half in earnest, he wrote a sonnet to the commander. The title given in the Cambridge Mss. is significant: "*On his dore when ye citty expected an assault.*" This was afterwards changed by Milton himself to *When the Assault was Intended to the City.*

In the summer of 1643 Milton made a journey into the country, and after a month returned with a wife. The event was attended with appropriate entertainment in the home in Aldersgate Street. The bride was Mary Powell of Forest Hill,

which was within the forest of Shotover, in which Milton's grandfather had been under-ranger. It seems that the Powells and the Miltons had been together in business transactions, the estate at Forest Hill being mortgaged to the scrivener.

It soon became evident that the marriage was an ill-considered one, for the Powells were Royalists. The bride, used to the gayeties of Cavalier society, soon tired of the sober life with the Roundhead schoolmaster in London. The two became mutually repugnant to each other, as was natural in such a union of frivolity with thoughtfulness. We are not called upon to fix the responsibility here, but we are not to forget that with all his love of a studious life Milton had no little susceptibility to the charm of feminine beauty. A month after the marriage the wife begged permission to visit her old home. She went to Forest Hill in July, and as she showed no disposition to return to Aldersgate Street, Milton at first wrote, but getting no reply, despatched a messenger, who returned, "having been dismissed with some sort of contempt." The result of this act on the part of the wife was to turn Milton's attention to the institution of marriage, and he published anonymously the pamphlet *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.* Emerson says: "It is to be regarded as a poem on one of the griefs of man's condition, unfit marriage. It should receive that charity which an angelic soul suffering more keenly than others from the unavoidable evils of human life is entitled to." In this he makes no mention of his personal case, but considers the principle as it were in the abstract. Pattison says: "His argument throughout glows with a white heat of concealed emotion." The stir occasioned by this pamphlet was widespread; the Church party was glad

that such a scandal had arisen in the Presbyterian family, and Milton went out from his own fold. Here is the beginning of the party known as Independents. Milton now reëdited the pamphlet on *Divorce*, to which he signed his name, although it contained a daring address to Parliament.

The list of pamphlets was now increased by the tract *On Education*, *Areopagitica*, and three more on Divorce: *The Judgement of Martin Bucer*, *Tetrachordon*, and *Colasterion*. The last three were called forth by the attacks of his enemies. The first of these was a challenge to the Westminster Assembly which had assailed him as "Divorcer"; the second was a review of the four chief places in Scripture where the subject of marriage is treated, and the third was a stinging reply to his assailants who were determined to suppress all of his sect.

In the meantime the fortunes of the Royalists were waning, until at Naseby, in June, 1645, defeat and ruin came at the hands of the new army of the Independents. By this defeat the Powells were made bankrupt, and in their distress they turned to Milton, whose star was in the ascendant. Some friends of both parties arranged by conspiracy a meeting of Milton and Mary Powell at a house where he often visited in St. Martins-le-Grand. When he entered she emerged from an adjoining room, threw herself at his feet and begged for reconciliation: —

> "With tears that ceas'd not flowing
> And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
> Fell humble, and embracing them, besought
> His peace . . . . . .
> Soon his heart relented
> Tow'rds her, his life so late and sole delight

Now at his feet submissive in distress!
Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
. . . . . .
At once disarmed, his anger all he lost."
—*Paradise Lost*, x. 937.

He received not only her but the family of Powells as well, including the mother-in-law, who probably encouraged the desertion. The house in Aldersgate Street had proved too small for his classes, and he received the addition to his family in the house of Barbican. It was here that the sonnets *On the Detraction* were written. They continued the controversy raised by the pamphlets on *Divorce*. The fact that they were written after his wife had returned, and when he had lost some interest in the question, accounts for the fact that they are less violent than the retorts in prose.

Milton's father died in March of this year and was buried in St. Giles', Cripplegate. As is the case with Burns, Carlyle, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, Milton owed as much to the father's influence as to the mother's. He has acknowledged his gratitude to him in prose and verse. In prose he praises "the ceaseless diligence and care of a father whom God recompense"; and in a Latin poem, *Ad Patrem*, written at Horton, there is a warmth of genuine piety and noble regard.

The Independents were now a powerful party and determined to espouse freedom of conscience against the system of Presbyterian Church Government which represented "No Toleration," and the suppression of all sects not in uniformity. Against this intolerance Milton raised his voice.

About Michaelmas, 1647, he gave up taking pupils and moved to a smaller house in High Holborn, opening into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Cromwell and Fairfax had marched through London, and the flight of Charles I. from Hampton Court to the Isle of Wight soon followed. Milton was studiously employed in literary work, planning a *Latin Dictionary*, a *Complete History of England*, and a *Digest of Christian Doctrine:* so much did his love of letters precede his Republicanism.

The English and Scottish Royalists rose in behalf of Charles, now a prisoner at the Isle of Wight. This uprising was the Second Civil War. Cromwell met and defeated the northern Royalists (Scots) at Preston, and Fairfax laid siege to Colchester, a town which had been seized by the Royalists. It surrendered after three months.

After the execution of the King in January, 1649, the power was centred in the Council of State. This Council needed for Secretary one who could translate the State papers, and it is not surprising that they turned to Milton, who had lately defended their action in the pamphlet, *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.* Here a new world opened to him. He would be a companion of the great men whom he admired — of Fairfax, Cromwell, and Vane. On March 15, 1649, he was inducted into office. As High Holborn was inconveniently distant from his desk, he moved to Petty France in Westminster, opening into St. James Park, where he lived until the Restoration. Besides translating despatches he was the censor of the official organ, the *Mercurius Politicus*, and he was expected to reply to any attacks made upon the government. He returned the fire of Gauden's *Eikon Basiliké*, in *Eikonoklastes*, and of Salma-

sius' *Defensio Regia*, in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*. In this close application he injured his eyesight.

In the conflict between Cromwell and Sir Harry Vane, Milton was impartial enough to sing the glories of each, and addressed to each a sonnet.

That Milton became totally blind in 1652 is evident from the fact that the sonnets of that year to Cromwell and Vane are not in his own hand. The reason that the sonnet on his blindness was not written earlier may be due to the fact that he had been devoting all his powers to the replies to *Clamor*. He had now completed the last of these — the *Pro se Defensio*. He had been made a subject of scorn and coarse jest in the *Clamor*, and his enemies at home taunted him with suffering the just judgment of God for his conduct in the affairs of Church and State. We must believe that these things at times caused him to be depressed. Masson says: "Again and again in Milton's later writings in prose and verse there are passages of the most touching sorrow over his darkened and desolate condition." When we consider how intense was Milton's nature: how bitter was his disposition when attacked; how proud he was, and with what impatience he bore some of the domestic infelicities for which he alone was responsible, we are amazed at the lofty serenity and the holy resignation which this poem reveals."

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "Having done with personal wars, he looked forward always to the time when he might let himself loose, and, leaving the disputes and passions of earth, soar into the poetic air in which alone he breathed with ease and pleasure and triumph. He loved the solemn beauty

of lofty thought more than any man in England has ever loved it."

Lowell says: "There is hardly a more stately figure in literary history than Milton's, no life in some of its aspects more tragical, except Dante's. In both these great poets, more than in any others, the character of the man makes part of the singular impressiveness of what they wrote, and of its vitality in after times."

In the *Tractate on Education* Milton had said that the reading of the masters would reveal to pupils "what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry, both in divine and human things." When he wrote this he little thought that his own "glorious and magnificent" poetry would be the highest revelation of the divine and the human; that it would inspire the same calm and steady heroism in others when facing the pitiless storm. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, iii. 41–44: —

> "Seasons return; but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine."

It was this magnificent spectacle which perhaps more than any other fortified Wordsworth against malignant truth or lie, and enabled him to be strong in himself and powerful to give strength. In the following, which Wordsworth wished prefixed to every edition of his works, we have the keynote of his spirit.

> "If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
> Then to the measure of that heaven-born light,
> Shine, Poet, in thy place, and be content.
> The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,

And they that from the zenith dart their beams,
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness),
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,
Among the branches of the leafless trees.
Then to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet, in thy place, and be content."

2. **Ere half my days.** Milton's eyesight began to fail several years before he became totally blind in 1652.

3. **one talent.** Cf. *Matthew*, XXV. 14.

"That first great gift, the vital soul."
— WORDSWORTH, *Prelude*, 1.

8. **fondly.** foolishly.

12. **thousands**, etc. Cf. Spenser, *Hymn of Heavenly Love*: —

"There they in their trinal triplicities
About him wait and on his will depend," etc.

1658–1673

ON HIS DECEASED WIFE

(In the hand of an amanuensis in the Cambridge Mss.)

In November, 1656, Milton married Catherine Woodcock, daughter of Captain Woodcock of Hackney, and the house in Petty France was lighted up with the presence of a genial and sympathetic woman.

His labors as Secretary were now somewhat relieved by the appointment of Andrew Marvel as assistant. It seems that Milton's fame as champion of liberty had spread abroad, for Aubrey says that he was urged to come to France and Italy, where he was offered "great preferments." Many foreigners visited England "to see the house and chamber where he was born." It was a time of quiet and he was meditating his flight "above the Aeonian Mount" in *Paradise Lost.* He writes to a friend: "I am glad to know that you are assured of my tranquil spirit in this great affliction of the loss of sight, and also of the pleasure I have in being civil and attentive in the reception of visitors from abroad. Why, in truth, should I not gently bear the loss of sight when I may hope that it is not so much lost as retracted inwards for the sharpening rather than the blunting of my mental edge." But the blessing of sympathetic and tender attentions from a partner in his joys and sorrows was not long to be his, for early in 1658 his wife died in childbirth, and the infant daughter lived but a month. Left with his three young daughters, the eldest only twelve, in his despondency he would wander from room to room and recall the pleasant hours spent with her in whose person shone that 'love, sweetness, and goodness' which for one year had made him strangely happy. We may fancy him stopping at the doors where his heart was used to beat so quickly, and

> "Waiting for a hand,
> A hand that can be clasp'd no more, —
> Behold him, for he cannot sleep."

In his dreams he sees her whom in his waking hours he was not permitted to gaze upon.

In the *In Memoriam* Tennyson reveals a similar experience during his day dreams: —

> "So word by word, and line by line,
> The dead man touch'd me from the past,
> And all at once it seem'd at last
> His living soul was flash'd on mine."

She was buried in St. Margaret's, Westminster.

In 1887 Mr. George W. Childs of Philadelphia, whose benefactions were so noble, "every one a testimony of peace and goodwill," offered to defray the expense of a Milton memorial window in St. Margaret's Church, and Archdeacon F. W. Farrar, who was asked to take the matter in charge, wrote the following to Mr. Childs: "Mr. Lowell wrote me a quatrain for the Raleigh window. I can think of no one so suitable as Mr. J. G. Whittier to write four lines for the Milton window. Mr. Whittier would feel the fullest sympathy for the great Puritan poet, whose spirit was so completely that of the Pilgrim Fathers." Mr. Childs forwarded the letter to Mr. Whittier, who accepted the invitation and composed the following: —

> "The new world honors him whose lofty plea
> For England's freedom made her own more sure,
> Whose song, immortal as its theme, shall be
> Their common freehold while both worlds endure."

Dr. Farrar on receiving these lines wrote to Mr. Whittier as follows: "Let me thank you for the four lines on Milton. They are all that I can desire, and they will add to the interest which all Englishmen and Americans will feel in the beautiful Milton window. I think that if Milton had now been living, you are the poet whom he would have chosen to speak of him,

as being the poet with whose whole tone of mind he would have been most in sympathy."

Cf. Arnold's address at the unveiling of this window, p. xxiv of this volume.

Mr. Henry Van Dyke says: "Of woman, woman as God meant her to be, woman as she is in true purity and unspoiled beauty of her nature, Milton never thought otherwise than nobly and reverently. Surely there is no more beautiful and heartfelt praise of perfect womanhood in all literature than this sonnet."

Cf. Wordsworth's tribute to his wife in *She was a Phantom of Delight*: —

> "The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
> A perfect woman, nobly planned;
> To warn, to comfort and command;
> And yet a spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light."

Cf. Tennyson, *Princess*: —

> "My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
> Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
> And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
> That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
> Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
> Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
> Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

Dedication to Enoch Arden: —

> "Dear, near and true — no truer Time himself
> Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore
> Dearer and nearer."

Cromwell died in August, 1658, and during Richard's Protectorate Milton remained in office. He wrote the State papers and composed three pamphlets. The first was *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes: showing that it is not lawful for any Power on Earth to compel in Matters of Religion.* In this he criticised Cromwell for supporting a State Church. The second, *Considerations touching the Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church*, was also an attack upon Cromwell's unjust interference in "free election of ministers." These were both in the spirit of Vane and the Republicans. In May, 1659, Richard abdicated, and on Monk being made Dictator, in March, 1660, the third pamphlet appeared. It was *A Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth.* Monk and the Parliament disregarded this splendid plea for a Republic. In May the Restoration came and the hunt for Regicides began. Milton fled from his home and took hiding at a friend's in Bartholomew Close, until the 29th of August, when the Act of Indemnity was passed. He was nevertheless taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and his *Defensio* and *Eikonoklastes* burned by the hangman. He was released from custody by the intercession of friends, Andrew Marvel, or Sir William Davenant, the new Poet-laureate.

> "On evil days now fallen, and evil tongues,
> In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,"

his cause lost, his enemies in triumph, his name a byword, his fortune impaired, at fifty-two he is thrown back upon himself, and he asks —

"by which means,
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,
To what can I be useful? Wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed?"

He begins to work upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought; he is attired with sudden brightness like a man inspired. *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, *Samson Agonistes* reveal to us

"Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

Lowell says: "It is idle to talk of the loneliness of one the habitual companions of whose mind were the Past and Future. I always seem to see him leaning in his blindness a hand on the shoulder of each, sure that one will guard the song which the other had inspired."

"What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou always visions of our light
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night."

2. **like Alcestis**, etc. An allusion to the *Alcestis* of Euripides, where Hercules rescues the heroine from the lower world and restores her to her husband.

"Euripides the human with his droppings of warm tears
And his touching of things human 'till they seem to reach
the spheres."

6. **Purification.** Cf. *Leviticus* xii.

10. **Her face was veiled.** Milton had never looked upon her face. Masson thinks there is here a possible allusion to Alkestis when restored to Admetus.

> "There is no telling how the hero twitched
> The veil off."
>
> —BROWNING, *Balaustion's Adventure.*

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